Langhorne (J.)
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Frontispiece to Corres. of Thes. & Const. Vol. I.

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LETTERS

BETWEEN

THEODOSIUS AND CONSTANTIA.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING THOSE THAT PASSED
FROM THEIR FIRST ACQUAINTANCE
TO THE DEPARTURE OF THEODOSIUS.

Now first published from the Original Manuscripts.

Enfans de l' Oisiveté! CHAULIEU.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
Printed for T. Becket and P. A. De Hondt,
at Tully's Head, in the Strand.
MDCCLXX.

TO

GEORGE COLMAN, Esq.

TO live beneath the golden star of love,
With happier fancy, passions more refin'd;
Each softning charm of tenderness to prove,
And all the finer movements of the mind.—

From gifts like these, say what the boasted gain
Of those who exquisitely feel or know?
—The skill from pleasure to extract its pain,
And open all the avenues of woe.

Yet shall we, Colman, at these gifts repine?—
Implore cold apathy to steel the heart?
Would you that sensibility resign?
And with those powers of genius would you part?

Ah no! my friend; nor deem the verse divine,
That weakness wrote in Petrarch's gentle strain!
When once he own'd at love's unfavouring shrine
"A thousand pleasures were not worth one pain."

THE dreams of fancy ſoothe the penſive heart;
For fancy ſtill can new delights diſpenſe:
The powers of genius purer joys impart;
For genius brightens all the ſprings of ſenſe.

O CHARM of every muſe-ennobled mind,
Far, far above the groveling crowd to riſe!—
Leave the low train of trifling cares behind,
Aſſert its birthright and affect the ſkies!

O RIGHT divine the pride of power to ſcorn;
On fortune's little vanity look down!
With nobler gifts, to fairer honours born,
Than fear, or folly fancies in a crown!

As far each boon that nature's hand beſtows
The worthleſs glare of fortune's train exceeds,
As yon fair orb, whoſe beam eternal glows,
Outſhines the tranſient meteor that it feeds.

To nature, COLMAN, let thy incenſe riſe,
For much-indebted, much haſt thou to pay;
For taſte refin'd, for wit correctly wiſe,
And keen diſcernment's ſoul-pervading ray.

To

To catch the manners from the various face,
  To paint the nice diverſities of mind.
The living lines of character to trace,
  She gave thee powers, and ſhe the taſk aſſign'd.

Seize, ſeize the pen! the ſacred hour departs!
  Nor, led by kindneſs, longer lend thine ear:
The tender tale of two ingenuous hearts
  Would rob thee of a moment and a tear.

J. Langhorne.

London,
Nov. 10, 1764.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS this volume may, poſſibly, fall into the hands of ſome who are unacquainted with the ſtory of Theodoſius and Conſtantia, it is thought neceſſary to print it here as related by the Spectator, N° 164.

"CONSTANTIA was a woman of extraordinary wit and beauty, but very unhappy in a father, who having arrived at great riches by his own induſtry, took delight in nothing but his money.

THEODOSIUS was the younger ſon of a decayed family; of great parts and learning, improved by a genteel and virtuous education. When he was in the twentieth year of his age he became acquainted with Conſtantia, who had not then paſſed her fifteenth. As he

lived but a few miles diſtant from her father's houſe, he had frequent opportunities of ſeeing her; and by the advantages of a good perſon, and a pleaſing converſation, made ſuch an impreſſion on her heart as it was impoſſible for time to efface: He was himſelf no leſs ſmitten with Conſtantia. A LONG ACQUAINTANCE made them ſtill diſcover new beauties in each other, and by degrees raiſed in them that mutual paſſion which had an influence on their following lives.

IT unfortunately happened that, in the midſt of this intercourſe of love and friendſhip between Theodoſius and Conſtantia, there broke out an irreparable quarrel between their parents, the one valuing himſelf too much upon his birth, and the other upon his poſſeſſions. The father of Conſtantia was ſo incenſed at the father of Theodoſius, that he contracted an unreaſonable averſion towards

his ſon, inſomuch that he forbad him his houſe, and charged his daughter upon her duty never to ſee him more. In the mean time, to break off all communication between the two lovers, who he knew entertained ſecret hopes of ſome favourable opportunity that ſhould bring them together, he found out a young gentleman of a good fortune and an agreeable perſon, whom he pitched upon as a huſband for his daughter. He ſoon concerted the affair ſo well, that he told Conſtantia it was his deſign to marry her to ſuch a gentleman, and that her wedding ſhould be celebrated on ſuch a day. Conſtantia, who was overawed by the authority of her father, and unable to object any thing to ſo advantageous a match, received the propoſal with a profound ſilence, which her father commended in her as the moſt decent manner of a virgin's giving her conſent to an overture of that kind. The noiſe of this intended marriage ſoon reached Theodoſius,

who, after a long tumult of paſſions which naturally riſe in a lover's heart on ſuch an occaſion, writ the following letter to Conſtantia:

'THE thought of my Conſtantia, which 'for ſome years has been my only happineſs, 'is now become a greater torment to me than 'I am able to bear. Muſt I then live to ſee 'you another's? The ſtreams, the fields and 'meadows, where we have ſo often talked 'together, grow painful to me; life itſelf is 'become a burthen. May you long be happy 'in the world, but forget that there was ever 'ſuch a man in it as

THEODOSIUS.'

THIS letter was conveyed to Conſtantia that very evening, who fainted at the reading of it; and the next morning ſhe was much more alarmed by two or three meſſengers that came

came to her father's houſe one after another, to enquire if they had heard any thing of Theodoſius, who, it ſeems, had left his chamber about midnight, and could no where be found. The deep melancholy which had hung upon his mind ſometime before, made them apprehend the worſt that could befall him. Conſtantia, who knew that nothing but the report of her marriage could have driven him to ſuch extremities, was not to be comforted: She now accuſed herſelf of having ſo tamely given an ear to the propoſal of a huſband, and looked upon the new lover as the murderer of Theodoſius: In ſhort, ſhe reſolved to ſuffer the utmoſt effects of her father's diſpleaſure, rather than comply with a marriage which appeared to her ſo full of guilt and horror. The father ſeeing himſelf entirely rid of Theodoſius, and likely to keep a conſiderable portion in his family, was not very much concerned at the obſtinate refuſal of

his daughter, and did not find it very difficult to excuſe himſelf upon that account to his intended ſon-in-law, who had all along regarded this alliance rather as a match of convenience than of love. Conſtantia had now no relief but in her devotions and exerciſes of religion, to which her afflictions had ſo entirely ſubjected her mind, that after ſome years had abated the violence of her ſorrows, and ſettled her thoughts in a kind of tranquillity, ſhe reſolved to paſs the remainder of her days in a convent. Her father was not diſpleaſed with a reſolution which would ſave money in his family, and readily complied with his daughter's intentions. Accordingly in the twenty-fifth year of her age, while her beauty was yet in all its height and bloom, he carried her to a neighbouring city, in order to look out a ſiſterhood of nuns among whom to place his daughter. There was in this place a father of a convent, who was

very much renowned for his piety and exemplary life; and as it is uſual in the Romiſh church for thoſe who are under any great affliction, or trouble of mind, to apply themſelves to the moſt eminent Confeſſors for pardon and conſolation, our beautiful votary took the opportunity of confeſſing herſelf to this celebrated Father.

We muſt now return to Theodoſius, who, the very morning that the abovementioned enquiries had been made after him, arrived at a religious houſe in the city where now Conſtantia reſided; and deſiring that ſecrecy and concealment of the Fathers of the convent, which is very uſual upon any extraordinary occaſion, he made himſelf one of the order, with a private vow never to enquire after Conſtantia; whom he looked upon as given away to his rival, upon the day on which, according to common fame, their marriage was to have

been ſolemnized. Having in his youth made a good progreſs in learning, that he might dedicate himſelf more entirely to religion, he entered into holy orders, and in a few years became renowned for his ſanctity in life, and thoſe pious ſentiments which he inſpired into all who converſed with him. It was this holy man to whom Conſtantia had determined to apply herſelf in confeſſion, though neither ſhe nor any other, beſides the Prior of the convent, knew any thing of his name or family. The gay, the amiable Theodoſius had now taken upon him the name of Father Francis, and was ſo far concealed in a long beard, a ſhaven head, and a religious habit, that it was impoſſible to diſcover the man of the world in the venerable conventual.

As he was one morning ſhut up in his confeſſional, Conſtantia kneeling by him, opened the ſtate of her ſoul to him; and after having

given

given him the hiſtory of a life full of innocence, ſhe burſt out in tears, and entered upon that part of her ſtory, in which he himſelf had ſo great a ſhare. My behaviour, ſays ſhe, has, I fear, been the death of a man who had no other fault but that of loving me too much. Heaven only knows how dear he was to me while he lived, and how bitter the remembrance of him has been to me ſince his death. She here pauſed, and lifted up her eyes that ſtreamed with tears toward the Father; who was ſo moved with the ſenſe of her ſorrows, that he could only command his voice, which was broke with ſighs and ſobbings, ſo far as to bid her proceed. She followed his directions, and in a flood of tears poured out her heart before him. The Father could not forbear weeping aloud, inſomuch that in the agonies of his grief the ſeat ſhook under him. Conſtantia, who thought the good man was thus moved by his compaſſion towards her,

and by the horror of her guilt, proceeded with the utmoſt contrition to acquaint him with that vow of virginity in which ſhe was going to engage herſelf, as the proper attonement for her ſins, and the only ſacrifice ſhe could make to the memory of Theodoſius. The Father, who, by this time, had pretty well compoſed himſelf, burſt out again in tears upon hearing that name to which he had been ſo long diſuſed, and upon receiving this inſtance of an unparalleled fidelity from one who, he thought, had ſeveral years ſince given herſelf up to the poſſeſſion of another. Amidſt the interruptions of his ſorrows, ſeeing his penitent overwhelmed with grief, he was only able to bid her, from time to time, be comforted—to tell her that her ſins were forgiven her—that her guilt was not ſo great as ſhe apprehended—that ſhe ſhould not ſuffer herſelf to be afflicted above meaſure. After which he recovered himſelf enough to give

her

her the abſolution in form; directing her at the ſame time to repair to him again the next day, that he might encourage her in the pious reſolution ſhe had taken, and give her ſuitable exhortations for her behaviour in it. Conſtantia retired, and the next morning renewed her applications. Theodoſius having manned his ſoul with proper thoughts and reflections, exerted himſelf on this occaſion in the beſt manner he could, to animate his penitent in the courſe of life ſhe was entering upon, and wear out of her mind thoſe groundleſs fears and apprehenſions which had taken poſſeſſion of it; concluding, with a promiſe to her, that he would, from time to time, continue his admonitions when ſhe ſhould have taken upon her the holy veil. The rules of our reſpective orders, ſays he, will not permit that I ſhould ſee you, but you may aſſure yourſelf not only of having a place in my prayers, *but of receiving ſuch frequent inſtructions as I can convey*

to you by letters. Go on cheerfully in the glorious courſe you have undertaken, and you will quickly find ſuch a peace and ſatisfaction in your mind, which it is not in the power of the world to give.

CONSTANTIA's heart was ſo elevated with the diſcourſe of Father Francis, that the very next day ſhe entered upon her vow. As ſoon as the ſolemnities of her reception were over, ſhe retired, as it is uſual with the Abbeſs, into her own apartment.

THE Abbeſs had been informed the night before of all that had paſſed between her noviciate and Father Francis, from whom ſhe now delivered to her the following letter:

'As the firſt fruits of thoſe joys and conſo-
'lations which you may expect from the life
'you are now engaged in, I muſt acquaint

'you

'you that Theodoſius, whoſe death ſits ſo
'heavy upon your thoughts, is ſtill alive;
'and that the Father to whom you have con-
'ſeſſed yourſelf, was once that Theodoſius
'whom you ſo much lament. The love which
'we have had for one another, will make us
'more happy in its diſappointment, than it
'could have done in its ſucceſs. Providence
'has diſpoſed of us for our advantage, though
'not according to our wiſhes. Conſider your
'Theodoſius ſtill as dead, but aſſure your-
'ſelf of one who will not ceaſe to pray for
'you in Father

'FRANCIS.'

CONSTANTIA ſaw that the hand-writing agreed with the contents of the letter: And upon reflecting on the voice, the perſon, the behaviour, and above all the extreme ſorrow of the Father during her confeſſion, ſhe diſcovered Theodoſius in every particular. After having

having wept with tears of joy, It is enough, ſay ſhe, Theodoſius is ſtill in being; I ſhall live with comfort and die in peace.

The letters which the Father ſent her afterwards are yet extant in the nunnery where ſhe reſided; and are often read to the young religious to inſpire them with good reſolutions and ſentiments of virtue. It ſo happened that after Conſtantia had lived about ten years in the cloyſter, a violent fever broke out in the place, which ſwept away great multitudes, and among others Theodoſius. Upon his death-bed he ſent his benediction in a very moving manner to Conſtantia; who at that time was herſelf ſo far gone in the ſame fatal diſtemper, that ſhe lay delirious. In the interval which generally precedes death in ſickneſſes of this nature, the Abbeſs finding that the phyſicians had given her over, told her that Theodoſius was juſt gone before her, and that he had

ſent

ſent her his benediction in his laſt moments. Conſtantia received it with pleaſure: And now, ſays ſhe, if I do not aſk any thing improper, let me be buried by Theodoſius. My vow reaches *no farther* than the grave. What I aſk is, I hope, no violation of it.—She died ſoon after, and was interred according to her requeſt.

THEIR tombs are ſtill to be ſeen, with a ſhort Latin inſcription on them to the following purpoſe:

HERE lie the bodies of Father *Francis* and Siſter *Conſtance. They were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided.*

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF THEODOSIUS and CONSTANTIA.

LETTER I.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

IS it poſſible that THEODOSIUS can approve the philoſophy of *Bernier*? What would become of Chriſtianity, were we to adopt the following Creed?—*L' abſtinence des plaiſirs me paroît un grand péché.* A ſin to abſtain from pleaſures!—what can he mean? Is not this perfectly the reverſe of all moral and religious precepts? Are not abſtinence, and mortification, and ſelf-denial echoed in our ears from the firſt dawn of reaſon? Are not

we taught to guard againſt the prevalence of pleaſures in general, and to look upon them as enemies under the maſk of friendſhip? Conſider them in a religious light, and they confeſſedly alienate the heart from its duty. The *lovers of pleaſure* cannot be *lovers of God*.—The *affections* cannot be *ſet on things above*, while they tend to earthly objects.—Conſider their moral tendency, and they will be found to vitiate and debaſe the ſoul. Selfiſhneſs, and a neglect of the ſocial duties, are inſeparable from the purſuit of pleaſures.—Theſe are jealous Gods, and demand from their votaries all the affections of the heart, all the attentions of the mind. They enſlave the better faculties, and make the ſenſes the tyrants of the underſtanding.

SURELY the mind is too noble a province for ſuch rulers; and, to me, the maxim of

Bernier

Bernier appears to be no leſs inconſiſtent with ſound philoſophy, than with true religion. I fancy you will find ſome difficulty to defend him in the opinion of

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER II.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

EVER amiable, and ever ingenious; pious in her enquiries, and modeſt in her concluſions;—what a pleaſure is it to accompany CONSTANTIA in the reſearches of truth and ſcience!—Clear in her conceptions, and acute in her expreſſion, through the medium of her language, we diſcover more clearly, even thoſe ſentiments that are not unknown to us.—It aſſiſts the underſtanding in the ſame manner as the teleſcope aids the eye, and brings near the diſtant object.

THUS it is, Madam, that while you call upon me to the deciſion of moral or religious

gious enquiries, and place me in the dictatorial chair; after having inveſted me with the commiſſion of a judge, like a ſkilful advocate, you in ſome meaſure qualify me for that office, by laying before me the whole merits of the cauſe.

WHEN I praiſed the philoſophy of *Bernier*, I had not indeed forgot that ſingular maxim of which you have taken notice; but I was by no means aware that you would ſeize upon this eminence, and from thence diſcharge your artillery both on the philoſopher, and his encomiaſt.

WELL—fair friend! ſince VENUS is armed for the engagement, and has already made her attacks, ſhe muſt expect to meet with a DIOMEDE.—But THEODOSIUS, perhaps, will not be ſatisfied with his conqueſt; if, like

the goddeſs of beauty, CONSTANTIA ſhould retreat, wounded *only* in the *hand*.

YES, my amiable moraliſt, I do approve the philoſophy of *Bernier*; nay, I adopt his creed too, and cordially declare with him, *L' abſtinence des plaiſirs me paroît un grand péché*. What is ſin? Is it not to act contrary to the will of the Supreme Being?—Beyond all doubt; where that will is known. Is it not evident that the benevolent Creator of the Univerſe intended, and ſtill intends, only the happineſs of his creatures?—This muſt be allowed from the conſent and the appearance of his works in general.—And is not *pleaſure* happineſs? It muſt be ſo, or the term is vain. If then the Supreme Being intended *principally* the happineſs of his creatures, and if *pleaſure* be happineſs; TO ABSTAIN FROM PLEASURE, IS TO FRUSTRATE THE INTENTIONS OF PROVIDENCE—to act contrary to his

his will; which is, confeſſedly, the very eſſence of ſin — *L' abſtinence des plaiſirs eſt un* GRAND *péché.* It is a *capital* ſin to abſtain from pleaſure, ſince it muſt have been the *primary* view of the divine beneficence to communicate pleaſure to human nature.

To what other end was this pomp, this magnificence of beauty ſcattered over the viſible univerſe? Is not this the language of nature, through all her ſmiling works? "Children be happy—brought into exiſtence "by the command of that glorious Being "who is LOVE *itſelf*, your inheritance is plea- "ſure, and it is your only duty to cultivate it "well." Are they not, therefore, children of diſobedience, who, thus invited into the vineyard of pleaſure, ſtand idle in the market-place, and vainly ſay, that *no man hath employed them?*

HATH God created a Paradiſe, and will not man look around him to enjoy it; but, like his firſt parent, as deſcribed by the Engliſh poet, ſtill penſively contemplate himſelf in the *murmuring* fountain? Shall he for ever ſeek his image in the waters of adverſity; and ſhall the fair ſcenes of life be deformed through ſuch a mirror?

SURELY to abſtain from pleaſure is no inferior degree of guilt; ſince that very abſtinence is a reproach to the eternal and invariable Benevolence!

FROM whom do we derive every natural appetite? By whoſe wiſdom were the fine organs of ſenſation formed? To whoſe bounty do we owe the objects of gratification? And to whoſe benevolence are we indebted for the capacity of enjoyment? Proceed

ceed not theſe powers and faculties from the great ſource of all things? Was not each adapted to its peculiar function? And is not the neglect of theſe capacities a fault? Is not the mortification of them a crime?

By what means came Pleasure into the world? Was it introduced by ſome malignant ſpirit? Did ſome Dæmon contrive it for the deſtruction of mankind? That could not be; for no inferior being could have power to pervert the faculties and capacities of human nature. In ſuch a caſe, the Supreme Creator muſt have been an imperfect being.—He muſt have wanted the will to ſecure the happineſs of his creatures, or, if he had the will, he muſt have been without the power to execute or eſtabliſh it. Either of theſe ſuppoſitions, it would be folly to admit. Pleaſure, therefore, can only owe its origin

to

to God, and its very name proves it to be of divine extraction.

And ſhall we refuſe acquaintance with an object of heavenly deſcent? Shall we ungratefully bid the giver reſume his gifts, or reproach him with a ſuppoſition, that he would affect us with propenſities we ought not to indulge?

Yes, *Bernier*, you are in the right. The renunciation of pleaſure muſt be a ſin—not only actually, but effectually a ſin. The mind that refuſes admittance to ſuch a gueſt, muſt acquire a gloomy and unſocial habit; be fit only for the regions of monaſtic dulneſs, where lazy ſanctity offers a prepoſterous devotion to that Being, who intended that we ſhould rejoice in and partake of a general and ſocial happineſs.

When

When the bias of nature is oppoſed; when her ſovereign dictates are broken, man becomes incapable of rendering any acceptable ſervice either to his God, to ſociety, or to himſelf! To his God he is ungrateful, nay, he inſults him with a devotion more becoming the worſhippers of *Moloch*, while he ſuppoſes him capable of delighting in cruelty, of afflicting his creatures, by giving them paſſions, which it ſhould be a merit to mortify, and of tantalizing them, by requiring a rigid abſtinence from every inviting enjoyment that nature ſuggeſted.—To the intereſts and affections of ſociety he becomes cold and indifferent, when, what ſhould principally engage him to them, the ſocial deſires of nature groan beneath the yoke of undelighted abſtinence.—Upon the ſame principles, he is an enemy to himſelf, to that being which was given him for his enjoyment, and which at laſt he ſhall render back to the giver,

with

with "I knew that thou wert an hard maſ-
"ter, therefore, the talent that thou gaveſt
"me I have made no uſe of: Behold, here
"it is again."

O PLEASURE! Thou firſt, beſt gift of eternal beneficence! Faireſt and moſt beloved daughter of heaven, all hail! and welcome to ſojourn on earth! A ſtranger thou art to every malignant and unſocial paſſion, formed to expand, to exhilarate, to humanize the heart!

BUT whither has my ſubject tranſported me? Have I loſt ſight of CONSTANTIA? that cannot be; for pleaſure is my ſubject.

YET, poſſibly, my amiable friend is, by this time, more than half diſpleaſed. Where, ſays ſhe, will this end? Has THEODOSIUS conſpired with *Bernier* to revive the ſchool of *Epicurus*?

BY

By no means, Madam! The pleaſure we preach is not the offſpring of chance, but the child of God.

The *Epicuréan* doctrine of pleaſure is ſelfiſh; this that we would recommend is pious. —From conſiderations reſpecting the uncertainty of this life, and the improbability of another, the Athenian philoſopher, if we may believe his biographer, *Laertius*, taught his followers to purſue inceſſantly all that was called enjoyment.——From reflections that are honourable to THE ETERNAL PROVIDENCE; that conclude him to be the liberal giver of all that deſerves the name of enjoyment, of the objects that gratify, and the faculties that enjoy—in obedience to his benevolent intentions, would we ſummon the world to the purſuit of pleaſure, and convince it that the ſun doth not ſhine in vain.

NOR will this doctrine, as my fair friend apprehends, be at all inconſiſtent with the pure precepts of that religion we profeſs.

FOR, after all, what is pleaſure? Is it to be found at the table of riotous feſtivity; or, in the venal arms of erratic love? Impoſſible! for theſe are the haunts of madneſs, of meanneſs, diſguſt and folly.

HUMAN PLEASURE is of a delicate temper. She diſclaims all connections with indecency and exceſs—She declines the ſociety of untender *Deſire*, and of *Riot* roaring in the jollity of his heart. A ſenſe of the dignity of human nature always accompanies her, and ſhe cannot admit of any thing that degrades it. *Tenderneſs*, *good Faith*, *Modeſty*, and *Delicacy* are her handmaids; *Temperance* and *Chearfulneſs* are her boſom friends.—She is no ſtranger to the endearments of love; but

ſhe

ſhe always conſults her *handmaids* in the choice of the object: She never refuſes her preſence at the ſocial board, where her *friends* are always placed on her right-hand, and on her left. During the time, ſhe generally addreſſes herſelf to *Chearfulneſs*, till *Temperance* demands her attention.

LET us now, CONSTANTIA, enquire whether this amiable being merits the charge that you have brought againſt her.

WILL ſhe alienate the heart from its duty?—But, how? has it not already appeared, that ſhe herſelf was ſent from God, the beſt gift of infinite benevolence?—It is only in the abuſe, in the perverſion of the gift, that the heart can be alienated from its duty.

THE lovers of pleaſure may, undoubtedly, be lovers of God.—To be pleaſed with the gift,

gift, and not to love the giver, would be unnatural and ungrateful.—Hence the charge of the inſpired writer, That ſome were *lovers of pleaſure* more *than lovers of God.*—What was this more or leſs than the charge of ingratitude?

THE *affections*, you ſay, cannot be *ſet on things above*, while they tend to earthly objects. Literally, they cannot;—but the beſt devotion, that ſuch an imperfect creature as man is capable of paying, is derived from his mortal feelings, perceptions and enjoyments. —When he finds himſelf happy in theſe, he is naturally led to adore that being who gave them; to look up with gratitude to him, and ſo far to *ſet his affections on things above*, as he has reaſon to hope for a happier allotment in an improved ſtate of exiſtence.—Thus far, even a regard to things on earth, may aſſiſt his piety, and encourage his hope.

Our ideas of heavenly objects are extremely abſtracted from ſenſe, and yet it is difficult, through any other *medium*, to extend the affections to them.—It has been obſerved, with philoſophical truth, by one of the ſacred writers, That *if a man love not his brother whom he hath ſeen, how ſhould he love God whom he hath not ſeen?*—I will borrow his mode of reaſoning, and will add, If a man love not thoſe gifts of God which he hath ſeen, how ſhould he ſet his affection on thoſe which he hath not ſeen?—If he hath not been pleaſed with thoſe enjoyments which the divine bounty hath allotted him, as peculiarly adapted to this ſtate of Being; what moral proſpect can he have of being better ſatisfied in any future ſtate?

But you quarrel with the *moral* tendency of *pleaſure*, and load it with the heavy charge of vitiating and debaſing the mind; adding,

that ſelfiſhneſs, and a neglect of the ſocial duties, are inſeparable from the purſuit of it.—Has not my friend made a *miſnomer* here, in giving the name of *Pleaſure* to *Vice*? Change the terms only, and the charge is juſt. It is impoſſible that *innocent* pleaſures ſhould *vitiate*, or that *delicate* enjoyments ſhould *debaſe* the mind.—It is impoſſible that thoſe ſocial delights which *ſoften* the heart, ſhould make it *ſelfiſh*, or exclude from its feelings a regard for the happineſs of others.

If we look into the minds and manners of men, we ſhall find that not the very abſtemious, the mortified, or the ſanctimonious, are moſt diſtinguiſhed for ſocial virtues.—The reaſon, I think, is obvious—when innocent appetites and deſires are reſtrained, the ſocial affections languiſh under the ſame oppreſſion.—It is ſcarcely poſſible, that any man who admits of no enjoyments in himſelf,

ſhould

ſhould be indulgent to thoſe of others.—We behold innumerable inſtances of this, both in thoſe who cannot and in thoſe who will not enjoy.

The encouragement of pleaſure, therefore, cheriſhes the ſocial virtues; and he who is of a happy diſpoſition himſelf, will be the firſt to promote the happineſs of his neighbour.

Yet, will not pleaſures enſlave the better faculties, and make the ſenſes the tyrants of the ſoul? No doubt—if the enjoyments of the mind are excluded; but the ſoul has its peculiar pleaſures which may and ought to take their turn; and if the intellectual appetites are gratified, as well as the ſenſual and the ſocial; the province of the mind will neither be uncultivated, nor be ſubject to the uſurpation of invaders.

PARDON me, Conſtantia! when I write to you, I know not when to have done!—even now I lay down the pen with reluctance—even now, with a ſigh, I ſubſcribe

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER III.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

THERE is nothing more true, than that credulity is the foible of women. I have a violent inclination to believe every word you have ſaid; as well your gallantry as your philoſophy.—Nay, I can hardly bewail the ruin of my poor arguments, though I have the vanity to think, that the breaches you have made in them, might eaſily be repaired.—However, you, certainly, had the happieſt addreſs to introduce your doctrine by the hand of flattery. The underſtanding of a woman, is by nothing ſo eaſily vanquiſhed, as by the artillery of praiſe.—If it be to your purpoſe to weaken it, give it the compliment of ſtrength. If you would blind

it, call it brighter than the day.—The praiſe of a philoſopher is really a moſt dangerous thing, and it is not in female fortitude to reſiſt it.—Accompanied with the ideas of truth and gravity, it makes its way to the heart without oppoſition; and the ſenſe and dignity of the ſpeaker conſpire with our natural love of it, to give it the ſanction of ſincerity.

Should I preclude all future compliments from the letters of Theodoſius, and ſay no more than what is uſually ſaid upon ſuch occaſions, *viz.* That I could not deſerve them, however true it might be, it would not ſave me from the charge of affectation—an imputation, which, of all others, would be moſt dreadful to me! Frank-hearted let me be eſteemed, and though deſtitute of every other excellence, I ſhall not be the meaneſt of my ſex.

But

BUT you ſee, my friend, I have given you ſerious, and I hope, ſatisfactory reaſons, why you ſhould ſhut up the fountains of adulation; unleſs you think that they will give fertility to a barren ſoil.—Aſſure yourſelf, I ſhall conclude this to be your opinion, if you pay any more compliments either to my perſon, or my underſtanding.

I FIND no inclination to controvert any of the principles contained in your laſt.—They are all amiable at leaſt, if they are not ſolid; and, poſſibly, it may be nothing more than the prejudice of a narrow education, that would with-hold any part of the credit, due to them.

AH, my friend; for, ſurely, you are my friend, if any confidence may be repoſed in human appearances; pity the ignorance of a hapleſs girl, I had almoſt ſaid an orphan,

unaſſiſted, and uninſtructed!—Believe me, Theodoſius, to your converſation I am indebted for almoſt all the valuable ſentiments I have.—You firſt taught me to think at large.—You told me that liberty of opinion was as much a natural inheritance as perſonal liberty—that human nature had long groaned under the tyranny of cuſtom; and that the worſt ſpecies of captivity, was the impriſonment of the mind.

Ever to be remembered is that diſtinguiſhed leſſon, which, upon our firſt acquaintance, you gave me in the Grove of Poplars. You politely pretended, that it was written by ſome other perſon for the inſtruction of ſome other lady;—but I ſoon diſcovered in it the ſpirit and manner of Theodoſius, and found it ſo well adapted to my own circumſtances, that I could no longer doubt either for whom, or by whom it was written.

NOTWITHSTANDING this diſcovery, I muſt beg you will favour me with a copy of it; for that which you gave me has been deſtroyed, I believe, by the zeal and induſtry of Father M———. Adieu!

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER IV.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

BY ſuppoſing me to be the author of the following Letter, you have laid me under ſome diſagreeable circumſtances; but what would you conclude, ſhould I, on that account, refuſe you a copy of it? Might you not juſtly charge me with that affectation which you ſo greatly deſpiſe? You ſhall have it, be the conſequence what it will—CONSTANTIA commands, and THEODOSIUS muſt obey.

Thoughts on the improvement of the Mind and Manners, addreſſed to a young lady of Bologna: By a Member of the Academy *Della Cruſca.*

"MADAM,

"THE firſt ſtep that a young lady can take towards improvement, is to be convinced

vinced that ſhe wants it.—The mind is ſituated in ſuch an obſcure receſs, and is ſo little the object of the ſenſes, that it is a difficult matter to take a view of it at all: much more, to behold it in its true light. Hence, we are apt to believe it ſufficiently furniſhed, when deſolate and empty; and to think it properly cultivated, though it produces little more than the rude growth of nature.

Better, however, is even that growth, than ſome artificial products. Better is the harveſt of wild ſimplicity, than the rank and thriving crops that have been cultivated by the induſtry of Folly!

Of all the offenſive weeds that are apt to ſpring up in a young mind, and to oppreſs its better fruits, *Affectation* is the moſt deſtructive—where it takes root, the love of Truth

and

and Nature periſh unavoidably, and Artifice and Inſincerity uſurp their place. Qualities like theſe are ſo infinitely odious, ſo perfectly oppoſite to all that is amiable or deſerving of confidence, that, if a woman had an averſion to being beloved, ſhe could not find a more effectual antidote.

NEVER, Madam, have I known an affected woman poſſeſſed of any amiable, or any virtuous quality!

THE *Coccatrici* is not unknown to you. Behold in her, then, a moſt inſtructive lecture on the management of the mind! For the *Coccatrici*, with the beſt natural underſtanding, not uncultivated by books, is at pains to render herſelf the moſt odious woman in the world. *Affectation* has the abſolute dominion both of her perſon and mind.—Her words, her motions, her actions, her opinions,

opinions, are all under the influence of *Affectation*; all receive its ugly and diſguſtful ſtamp.—Obſcurely born herſelf, the *Coccatrici*'s paſſion is Quality.—Without any accompliſhments of perſon, ſhe affects the ſoftneſs, the negligence, the languiſhments of beauty.—Theſe and innumerable more abſurdities ariſing from the ſame principle of *Affectation*, render her the contempt of your ſex, and the jeſt of ours.—Yet were ridiculous manners the only effect of this principle, the *Coccatrici* might be laughed at and pitied; but the ſame inſincerity, the ſame deviation from truth and nature which produces theſe, has other conſequences that render her deteſtable—ſhe is ſcurrilous and treacherous: nor is this to be wondered at. A mind which affectation has alienated from every natural principle of ſimplicity loſes, at the ſame time, the ſocial virtues, and becomes indifferent to the intereſts and the reputation of others.

Of no ſimple ingredients is this character compoſed.—Forbidding Pride, ridiculous Vanity, inſidious Inſincerity, virulent Malignity, make a part of the compoſition of the *Conatriti*.

Characters are always the beſt comments upon precepts.—In the *Conatrici*, Madam, you behold by what odious qualities a poliſhed underſtanding may be debaſed.

For the improvement of the manners, therefore, ſomething more muſt be neceſſary than the mere acquiſition of knowledge; and this ſomething I take to be the cultivation of benevolence and ſincerity. An infinite number of virtues will ſpring from theſe valuable roots.—The love of humankind will make you a friend to every fellow-creature; and, together with the approbation of your own heart, general eſteem and admiration will be

your reward.—The love of truth will always ſave you from affectation, and all its diſagreeable conſequences—Sacrifice at the ſhrine of Nature, and rather borrow from her your manners and ſentiments, than from the fantaſtic humours of Faſhion. From her, likewiſe, borrow your knowledge, and not from the labours of the ſchools.—She will give you no narrow or illiberal ideas of her great Author.—Be ſuch writers, therefore, your ſtudy, as have made her theirs; ſuch as have ſhewn the wiſdom, the œconomy, the prudence, the benevolent purpoſes of her works. The contemplation of ſuch objects gives the mind a large and liberal turn; lays a foundation for the moſt rational piety, and reconciles us to the allotments of life, when we behold the ſuperintendence of a wiſe and benevolent power, over every department of the univerſe.

NEXT to natural philoſophy, the hiſtory of humankind will merit your attention.—Various are the advantages to be derived from this courſe of reading.—A celebrated writer of antiquity has obſerved, that he who is ignorant of what happened before his own times, is ſtill a child.—Before I had made a competent acquaintance with hiſtory, I never could read this paſſage without pain and ſhame.—I imagined that the eyes of the great Orator were upon me, and that I appeared childiſh before him. I am now extremely well convinced, that what he obſerved, was comparatively juſt.

IGNORANCE is the characteriſtic of childhood, and the mind that is uninformed, at whatever period of life, is ſtill in a puerile ſtate.

FROM the knowledge of paſt events and their cauſes; from attending to the œconomy

of

of providence in the external and internal government of the world; by tracing the progreſs of ſcience, and the gradual improvement of the mind, we learn to form juſt conceptions of human actions and opinions, to make the beſt uſe of reaſon in foreſeeing the conſequences of principles yet unpractiſed; to enlarge and liberalize our religious ſentiments, while we contemplate the Supreme Being in the capacity of an univerſal parent; and to ſee what moral perfection the human mind is capable of, when man, in his ſavage, and in his civilized ſtate, is diſtinctly preſented to our view.

THESE, Madam, are enquiries worthy of a rational creature—worthy of that acute and penetrating genius which the liberal hand of Nature has given you!

MAKE an adequate uſe of her generous and valuable gifts.—Deſpiſe the ſneer of

ſuperficial foppery, that is ever jealous of ſuperior ſenſe, and dreads the knowledge of a woman, on account of its own ignorance.—If you are not without hopes of being united to a man of an accompliſhed mind, qualify yourſelf for his company.—Let him not be obliged to conſider his wife merely as a domeſtic, uſeful in her appointment; make him eſteem her as a rational companion, whoſe converſation may enliven the hours of ſolitude, and who, with a mind not vacant, or unfurniſhed, may, like the houſeholder in the goſpel, *bring forth out of her treaſure things new and old.*

'To what a deſpicable ſtate would your ſex be degraded, by thoſe monopolizers of dignity and knowledge, who would debar you from both!—What! were reaſon, and reflection, and memory, and every other faculty that is adapted to literary improvements, given to you as they are given to us, by a different

author,

author, or for different purpoſes?—Mean fallacy in our ſex, that would eſtabliſh the worſt ſpecies of tyranny over you, the tyranny of the mind! Groundleſs and illiberal fear in man, that he ſhould loſe his dignity in the eyes of a woman, who was not inferior to him in ſenſe! Is it the property of cultivated minds to hold cheap the accompliſhments of others? Is it not from ſuch minds only, that they can meet the reſpect due to their merit? —He who is afraid of marrying a woman, that is not abſolutely ignorant, gives a fair proof, at leaſt, that ſuch is not his own caſe.

THERE are provinces, in which our ſex may properly acquire and maintain a ſuperiority of knowledge, and in which it would not be worth your while to excell.—There are, likewiſe, certain departments in which you ſhould claim, unrivalled, the compliment

of excellence; but the cultivation of the mind, ſhould be equally the care of both, ſince nature has given to both, minds equally capable of cultivation.

To an acquaintance with natural and civil hiſtory, you will do well to join the lighter and more amuſive entertainments of the *Belles Lettres*.—The ſtudy of the former will enrich, that of the latter will embelliſh the mind.—From works of taſte and harmony, we derive a kind of mechanical virtue, and learn to admire what is truly beautiful and harmonious in moral life.—The genius of poetry has a ſoftening and humanizing influence on the mind; and its pathetic powers increaſe that charming ſenſibility, that enthuſiaſtic tenderneſs and delicacy of affection, which renders your lovely ſex ſo juſtly the delight and admiration of ours.

I MEAN not, however, that by this kind of reading you ſhould ſoften your mind, ſo much as form your taſte, by admiring and attending to what is perfectly beautiful, in one of the fineſt arts of imitation.

THIS art is ſo naturally adapted to cultivate that harmony, which the Academics of old eſteemed the eſſence of moral virtue, that I was always at a loſs to know why Plato would have poets baniſhed his commonwealth, till convinced, it was becauſe they hurt the intereſts of religion, and injured the dignity of the Gods, by the ſportive ſallies of the Muſe.

AFTER all, Madam, whatever proficiency you may have it in your power to make in literary accompliſhments, forget not that the qualities of the heart are infinitely preferable

to thoſe of the head. Should you be unable, for want of aſſiſtance, or opportunity, to furniſh your mind with the treaſures of antiquity; to acquaint yourſelf with the philoſophy of nature; or to embelliſh your taſte by the more poliſhed labours of Genius; remember that you ſtill have it in your power to make yourſelf amiable by a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, by an openneſs of heart, and ſimplicity of manners."

— —

THUS far, CONSTANTIA, the grave academician—you will now, I hope, not be unwilling to take up the lighter carriage of the *Friend*. ——Ah! name, replete with tenderneſs!—Comprehenſive of every kind, every faithful ſentiment! "Surely you are my friend," did you ſay,—Yes, Conſtantia, believeit, evermore

more believe it.—If every ardent wiſh for your happineſs, every active impulſe to ſerve and oblige you; if the higheſt eſteem, and the tendereſt regard, may be allowed to conſtitute the moſt eſſential part of friendſhip, *ſurely*, THEODOSIUS is the friend of CONSTANTIA.

YET, too generous in your acknowledgments; too liberal even in your ideas of gratitude;—why will you attribute to me any part of your accompliſhments? Alas! what am I? The little virtues I have, if any I have, I borrow from CONSTANTIA, and by continually contemplating her perfections, I acquire, as it were, a habit of imitating them.

CAN I make a better uſe of theſe uncheerful hours, that I am doomed to paſs at a diſtance from the friend of my heart?—*Dans ces retraites ſolitaires*, I find no other conſola-

tion than what writing to, or thinking of her affords me.

WHY thoſe needleſs prohibitions of praiſe? Why ſhould CONSTANTIA forbid her friend to compliment either her perſon, or her underſtanding?—the former has no need of, and the latter is above all compliment!

WHAT luxury in the indulgence of this growing tenderneſs! ah precious luxury!—perhaps, forbidden!

ADIEU! ADIEU!

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER V.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

EVER generous, and obliging; but, poſſibly, too tender!——Yet ſhall I blame my friend for his tenderneſs?—Surely, no—but why "forbidden?"—what does that mean?—Shall the intercourſe of friendſhip be forbidden?—I cannot think of that—I cannot, muſt not loſe the friendſhip of THEODOSIUS.

You have my moſt grateful thanks for the Academician's letter, which I will endeavour to ſecure from the inquiſition of Father M——. The good man has a ſtrange averſion to every thing that tends to open the underſtanding.—Yet why would he keep one in the dark? Can it be of any advantage to him?

him? In my opinion, the Academician, or, with your leave, THEODOSIUS, has inconteſtibly proved the female right to learning.

THIS, beyond all doubt, provoked the worthy father's zeal, whom I have heard ſay, That all knowledge was inveſted in the church.—Would to heaven, that the church would be liberal for once, and diſpenſe a little of that knowledge to an ignorant girl, who would be no leſs thankful for that than for its prayers.

WILL you, my friend, forgive me, when I tell you, that I have frequently wiſhed you had been in holy orders, and appointed my confeſſor inſtead of Father M——? I flatter myſelf you would have indulged me with works of learning and imagination, and would not have confined my poor library to *Oraiſons* and *Notre Peres* alone.

Do not you think that the profeſſors of religion hurt its intereſts, by purſuing them too cloſely? Suppoſe they ſhould now and then afford us a little reſpite!—Suppoſe they ſhould diverſify our reading and our ſtudies; ſhould we not return to the attentions of religion with greater alacrity?

All theſe churchmen, however, are not equally contracted in their opinions.—I have lately ſtolen the reading of a very delightful book, which, I have been informed, was written for the entertainment and inſtruction of the Duke of Burgundy, by the preſent Archbiſhop of Cambray, his preceptor.—I have, moreover, been told that the publication of this book was effected by the treachery of a domeſtic, and that it brought freſh inconveniencies on the prelate already in diſgrace!

In what a miſerable condition is human reaſon, when liberal ſentiments will bring a man into diſgrace! Adieu!

Constantia.

LETTER VI.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

I Rejoice that you are become acquainted with the new publication of M. *Fenelon*, the moſt amiable philoſopher that ever Europe produced! His affluence of imagination; his glowing and impaſſioned ſentiments; the attic ſweetneſs and delicacy of his ſtyle—but, above all, that delightful enthuſiaſm, which, worſhipping at the ſhrine of ſimple and beautiful Nature, makes every reader a convert to her principles;—all theſe qualities give to *Fenelon* the palm of philoſophy among the moderns.

I mourn, with my generous CONSTANTIA, I mourn his diſgrace; for it is the diſgrace of my

my country. It is not for *Fenelon* we need repine.—Reconciled to every event by the *addouciſſement* of philoſophy, is he not more happy in the confines of CAMBRAY, than he could be, if, careſſed amongſt the number of favourites, he yet breathed the unwholeſome air of a court? Zealous in the diſcharge of his paſtoral duties, a friend to humankind from principle, buſy in the exerciſe of beneficence to all orders, and all ſocieties of men—Who is ſo happy, or ſo great as *Fenelon*?

Like ſome fair ſtar that ſhoots its evening ray
Brighter along the dim wood's opening way,
So FENELON, by favouring courts admir'd,
More feebly ſhone than FENELON retir'd.

THINK not, CONSTANTIA, that I am partial to this illuſtrious man, becauſe I have the honour

honour and the happineſs of his friendſhip. —The following ſubſtance of a converſation, that once paſſed between us, will convince you, that I have given you no flattering picture of him.

Mr. De Fenelon.

My regard for you, Theodoſius, makes me wiſh your happineſs; and if my longer acquaintance with life may intitle me to give you any advice on that ſubject, I will not be ſparing of it.

Theodosius.

Sir, you will do me the greateſt favour. I have hitherto been a ſtranger to miſery; and if you would inſtruct me how to preſerve the happineſs I enjoy, methinks you need only tell me, how I may deſerve the continuance of your friendſhip.

Mr. De Fenelon.

On that you may at all times rely. But our friendſhips, like every thing elſe that we enjoy, are ſubject to the influences of chance and time. I will give you the beſt proof I can of mine, therefore, while I have it in my power.——

The life of man has many cares belonging to it; but the firſt and greateſt care is that of the immortal Soul.—We cannot be too attentive to the intereſts of a Being that ſhall endure for ever, and to place any other in the ſcale againſt theſe, would be abſolute folly.

Theodosius.

My Lord!——

Mr. De Fenelon.

—But you cannot want convictions of this

kind.—Yet there is one particular care reſpecting the ſoul which may not have occurred to you.——

THEODOSIUS.

I BEG to be informed of it.

Mr. De FENELON.

HAVE not you obſerved the progreſſive improvement of the mental faculties, from the firſt dawn of reaſon, to the decline of life?

THEODOSIUS.

THAT improvement muſt be obvious to every eye;—but ſome of thoſe faculties ſeem to decline with life itſelf—the imagination frequently languiſhes under the weight of years—the powers of reaſon and reflection are, many times, almoſt wholly loſt; and the memory is entirely effaced.—So far the per-

fection of the ſoul ſeems to depend on the perfect ſtate of the body.

Mr. De Fenelon.

As the body is merely the habitation of the ſoul, it's tenant can no longer occupy thoſe apartments that are ruinous, or decayed by time or accidents.—Hence ſome of the mental faculties ſeem to be annihilated, when they are only ſuſpended; thus oftentimes we may vainly ſollicit the memory for an object to-day, with which it will voluntarily preſent us to-morrow. An intelligent nature cannot ſuffer from material influences, and, therefore, may exiſt independently of them.—Nay, it may exiſt in the perfection of it's powers, though thoſe powers, for want of their proper vehicles, are not called forth.

Theodosius.

I conceive the poſſibility of this, and

am

am now impatient to be informed, what new care it is, which has the ſoul for it's object.

Mr. De Fenelon.

As the faculties of the ſoul are continually improvable, and cannot be deſtroyed by what happens to the body, it is probable that in whatever ſtate of comparative perfection they are, upon quitting this mode of being, in the ſame they will paſs into another, which, though higher, ſhall be ſtill improvable like the former.

Theodosius.

What would you infer from hence?

Mr. De Fenelon.

That, next to the exerciſe of virtue, the improvement of the mind ought to be our principal care: For as the former will entitle

us to an improved ſtate of being, ſo the latter will qualify us for the enjoyment of it. From the benevolence of the Supreme Being, as well as upon the principles of reaſon and philoſophy, we have a right to hope that the ſoul, when it quits the body, will not revert to that ſtate of ignorance in which it appears to be, when it firſt informs it.

THEODOSIUS.

THIS is a very pleaſing concluſion, and ſuggeſts to me a variety of agreeable reflections.

Mr. De FENELON.

I HAVE received great ſatisfaction from the contemplation of it. It is pregnant with many circumſtances of comfort.—When we have been toiling for the acquiſition of knowledge, we may have the pleaſure to conclude, that we have not been *labouring for the bread*

that

that periſheth; but for that which endureth unto eternal life.—It muſt be the greateſt conſolation to reflect, that the mental improvements we make, ſhall laſt beyond the grave; and that the treaſures of knowledge we lay up here, we ſhall enjoy hereafter.——

If we have contributed by our own writings to the advancement of ſcience and the cultivation of the mind—what a glorious reflection does it afford, that theſe effects will laſt for ever—that the ſouls which have received new lights, new information from our diſcoveries, ſhall retain them in every ſucceſſive period of being; and that thus we ſhall have contributed to the perfection of glorified natures and everlaſting intelligences. —There is ſomething raviſhing in the thought —I am tranſported—I feel a godlike pleaſure in the indulgence of it.

THEODOSIUS.

You, my good Lord, who have contributed ſo greatly to the cultivation of the human mind, have a right to all the pleaſures that ſuch reflections can afford;—and great, indeed, and adequate to the dignity of human nature, are the objects of complacency that attend them. But, for my own part, I have always thought, that every improvement the mind could make in this ſtate of being, would be ſuperfluous in another, that its faculties would be infinitely enlarged, and that at the command of Omnipotence, it would make a quick tranſition to the angelic nature.

Mr. DE FENELON.

FOR ſuch ſuppoſitions, however common they may be, I apprehend we have little more or better authority than what ſelf-flattery will afford

afford us: It appears, and has ever appeared to me, more probable that the ſoul ſhould ariſe to a ſtate of ſuch perfection as we conceive of the angelic natures, by more regular gradations, than are uſually aſſigned to it.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

HERE our converſation was interrupted by a letter from Madame *Guyon*; which while the good prelate was peruſing with viſible eagerneſs, I retired into the garden, and was led into the following melancholy reflections:

"How affecting is it to obſerve, that the moſt enlightened minds make the neareſt approaches to certain degrees of madneſs, or of weakneſs! Genius ſeems to be the child of enthuſiaſm; and yet enthuſiaſm is frequently the diſgrace, the ruin of genius. The Archbiſhop of Cambray, the literary ornament of Europe, diſtinguiſhed for the moſt pure, the

moſt refined philoſophy, is carried away by the dreams of fanaticiſm, and attends to the ravings of an inſane devotee; for ſuch is this Madame *Guyon!*"

After walking ſome time alone, I was again joined by the Archbiſhop, who, with that calm benignity of countenance peculiar to him, reſumed the converſation. What followed would ſtretch this letter too far—Expect an account of it in my next.

Adieu!

Theodosius.

LETTER VII.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

Mr. De FENELON.

YOU will excuſe me, Theodoſius; a letter from Madame *Guyon* always commands my attention. That ſeraphic woman ſeems to have obtained a kind of beatification; and I look upon an addreſs from her as it were a voice from heaven.—But I will not ſollicit your attention to a ſubject which has given occaſion to ſo many unhappy diſputes.—I will purſue my purpoſe of giving you the beſt inſtructions I am able to give you, with regard to your conduct and your happineſs.

BEFORE we can tread the ſtage of life with that gracefulneſs and propriety, which ren-

der

der every character eaſy and agreeable, it is abſolutely neceſſary, that we ſhould acquire a conſiderable knowledge both of mankind, and of ourſelves.—This knowledge is not haſtily, or eaſily to be obtained.—We muſt have mixed with ſociety, and have attended to the different forms, that the paſſions and purſuits of men aſſume in different characters, before we can form any judgment of them that ſhall be generally adequate. I have known ſome men of ſo keen a penetration, that they have been able to judge of characters almoſt intuitively;—but haſty deciſions, though they may often be right, may likewiſe many times be wrong; and they never ought to have the leaſt weight with us in any thing, that may concern the reputation or the intereſt of the perſon we ſo judge of.—What I would obſerve, is, that there are methods of acquiring a readineſs of judging;

and

and that ſuch an acquiſition muſt be of great uſe to us in the commerce of life.—The only means I know of are thoſe I mentioned to you—to attend to and learn the different forms that the paſſions aſſume in different characters.

THEODOSIUS.

AND yet, my Lord, may not an artificial deportment frequently render ſuch an enquiry vain?

MR. DE FENELON.

IT may ſometimes perplex it, but will ſeldom render it vain;—even artifice itſelf takes a colour from the paſſions, and they may be read and diſtinguiſhed in its operations.

THEODOSIUS.

THUS you would inſtruct me to know men

in

in general;—but may there not be a more particular proceſs of enquiry, where a more particular knowledge of individuals is neceſſary? I ſhould be glad to be informed how I might obtain a thorough knowledge of the man I could wiſh to make my friend.

Mr. De Fenelon.

For this different methods have been recommended, and different experiments have been tried. Some have had recourſe to the chymical proceſs of the bottle, and others to a fictitious diſtreſs; but both to no valuable effect. The firſt did not conſider that a man deprived of reaſon is no longer a man; and the laſt had not reflected that, on certain occaſions, a man might want the power, though he wanted not the will to relieve the diſtreſſes of his friend.——

If you would obtain a perfect knowledge of any man, it muſt be from his domeſtic

character. Such a father, maſter, brother, ſon, or huſband, as he ſhall be found, ſuch a friend will he be.—It is, moreover, in the minuter circumſtances of his conduct, that we are to enquire for a man's real character.—In theſe he is under the influence of his natural diſpoſition, and acts from himſelf—while in his more open and important actions, he may be drawn by public opinion, and many other external motives, from that bias which nature would have taken.——

WERE I once more to make choice of a friend, the firſt qualities I would look for in him, ſhould be *Sincerity*, and *Senſibility*: For theſe are the foundation of almoſt all other virtues.

THEODOSIUS.

STOP not here, my Lord, I intreat you; but tell me how that ſelf-knowledge is to be acquired;

acquired; the acquiſition of which you have allowed to be ſo eſſential to our happineſs.

Mr. De Fenelon.

There is no ſtudy ſo neceſſary as this; and yet, unfortunately, there is none ſo difficult. Self-knowledge, like that Heſperian fruit, which was defended by the vigilance of ſleepleſs dragons, is ſurrounded by ſo many powerful guards, that it is almoſt inacceſſible.—Indulge me a moment, Theodoſius, in my favourite province of allegory.—The moſt aſſiduous of theſe guards is Vanity, and, at the ſame time, the moſt artful.—If you are determined to have acceſs, ſhe has addreſs enough to impoſe upon you, and, inſtead of *Self-knowledge*, to preſent you with a different object, fair, indeed, and beautiful to look upon, but very unlike the figure you ought to have ſeen.—Pride ſtands, a dangerous

gerous centinel, at the gate of *Self-knowledge*; when you demand admittance, he ſeats you on a throne, and bids you look down on the crowds that ſurround you; you look with complacency, and return with ignorance.—Should the arts both of PRIDE and VANITY be ineffectual, there is yet another redoubt to be attacked, which is defended by SELF-DECEPTION. This is the ſubtleſt of all the guards that ſurround the tree of Self-knowledge—in her hand is a waving mirrour that turns every way, which ſo dazzles and confuſes the ſight, that you cannot poſſibly diſtinguiſh the real object you aim at, from the images reflected in her mirrour;—at length, with one of thoſe images you return, ſatisfied and deceived.

THEODOSIUS.

THESE, indeed, make a formidable guard.—How ſhall they be overcome?

Mr. De Fenelon.

Only by the aſſiſtance of Truth. As the machinations of inferior enchanters vaniſh upon the appearance of an abler magician; or, rather, as the *diableries* of infernal ſpirits are deſtroyed by the influence of a celeſtial; ſo Pride, Vanity, and Self-deception, fly from the approach of Truth.

Theodosius.

Yet is it not, my Lord, a matter of difficulty, to engage this valuable auxiliary?

Mr. De Fenelon.

—Or, rather, to perſuade ourſelves to employ him—for there the difficulty lies:—Before he can be brought over to our party, he requires ſo many mortifying conceſſions, that we reject his ſervices, becauſe we are unwilling to purchaſe them at ſo dear a rate.

Theo-

THEODOSIUS.

YET ſurely, my Lord——

Mr. De FENELON.

THEY are but imaginary poſſeſſions that he requires us to part with.—It is very true; and, for that reaſon, one would think the terms not hard.—The dominions of VANITY, like the gardens of *Armida*, are purely ideal, and may be given up without loſs.

THEODOSIUS.

AND yet, poſſibly, we are indebted to this ſame VANITY, for half the happineſs we enjoy.—Does not the whole art of happineſs conſiſt, principally, in being well deceived?

Mr. De FENELON.

YOU have drawn me upon a rock that I wiſhed to avoid.—For the ſake of TRUTH

and VIRTUE, I am willing to perſuade myſelf that it is not ſo;—certainly, we are not deceived when we derive our happineſs from the cultivation of theſe.—At the ſame time, I will own, that, ſuch is the weakneſs of human nature, there are a thouſand *douceurs* neceſſary to give a reliſh to life, in the compoſition of which, deceit has a principal hand.—But what the Engliſh poet calls "The ſober Certainty of waking Bliſs," that muſt undoubtedly flow from the exerciſe, or the reflection of what is real and ſubſtantial.

THEODOSIUS.

IT ſhould ſeem, then, that there are two ſources of happineſs;—one from which the imagination derives fancied entertainment and unreal pleaſure; another that, ariſing in conſcious virtue, yields to reaſon and reflection a more genuine delight.

Mr. De Fenelon.

Evidently—and we may drink at both theſe ſources: But we ſhould make it our care, that the fountains of imaginary pleaſure contain nothing, that may tend to inebriate or diſorder the mind.

Theodosius.

Can they ever be attended with ſuch conſequences?

Mr. De Fenelon.

Too frequently they are.—The imagination may be indulged, till it ſhall acquire an habitual empire over the underſtanding.—A man whoſe genius and temper are naturally warm and fanciful, may give himſelf up ſo entirely to the ſweet influences of enthuſiaſm, that the powers of cool reaſon and diſcern-

ment ſhall be greatly invalidated, if not wholly ſuſpended.—

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IMAGINE, my Conſtantia, how this ſpeech affected me.—At that moment the affair of Madame *Guyon* occurred to me, and I wept to think, that my amiable inſtructor, in his own perſon, bore teſtimony to the truth of his obſervation.

THE remaining part of our converſation, with my anſwer to ſome paſſages in your laſt letter, ſhall follow this without delay.

ADIEU!

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER VIII.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

I CONCEALED my tears as well as poſſible, while the good prelate thus proceeded.

Mr. De FENELON.

EVERY principle acquires force and influence from habit; and if it be, as it certainly muſt be, for our happineſs, to live under the dominion of *Reaſon*, we ſhould take care to exerciſe and conſult it upon every occaſion.—Thus it will acquire ſtrength and efficacy, and our obedience to its dictates, will become eaſy from habit.

THEODOSIUS.

THE dictates of *Reaſon* are undoubtedly the laws of life.—But, in general, my Lord,

how impotent and ineffectual!—What avails her legiſlation, when the *Will*, the executive power, ſeems not to be in her intereſt?

Mr. De Fenelon.

The *Will* muſt be gained over by art, and management. Where *Reaſon* has not eſtabliſhed her empire, ſhe muſt do it by degrees;—exert her authority in little and indifferent things—make mock-fights with the enemy, and have recourſe to every other gradual and perſuaſive method, which are made uſe of to reconcile us to taſks of difficulty.

Theodosius.

This method, indeed, my Lord, is the moſt promiſing; but it ſeems that we either want ſkill, or inclination to apply it.—We always conſider reaſon, as impoſing her dictates with a magiſterial ſpirit.—She ſeems to approach

approach us with an air of rigid honeſty, rude and unpoliſhed, as the dictators from the plough.——

Mr. De Fenelon.

And did the ſame ſimplicity of manners, which diſtinguiſhed the age of *Cincinnatus*, prevail at this day, ſhe would be as ſucceſsful too.—Alas! Theodoſius, to the loſs of that ſimplicity; to our deviation from nature, we owe the greateſt part of thoſe evils whereof we complain. I think the precept moſt eſſential to the happineſs of human life, is, "Live agreeably to nature."

Theodosius.

This precept, my Lord, appears to want a comment.—May I have the happineſs to hear the Archbiſhop of *Cambray* preach from ſuch a text?

Mr. De FENELON.

NATURE herſelf will here be the beſt commentator. She, as well as REASON, ſeems to have her conſcience in the human mind, which fails not to reproach us with every breach of duty.

ALAS! my friend, how often do we do violence to NATURE, and caſt her dictates behind! What artificial miſeries do we lay up for ourſelves, from the indulgence of imaginary wants!—we are not content to ſearch for happineſs within the ſphere of nature—it appears to be barren and inſipid;—we fly for it into the more ſpacious and ſplendid circle of Art; we are amuſed and diſſipated in the ſearch; but we never find the object we are in queſt of.—At length, weary and diſappointed, we look back to the long-for-

ſaken

ſaken walks of Nature; ſorry that ever we deſerted them, and ready enough to compliment them with thoſe pleaſure-yielding qualities which we ſhould now be glad to find.—But this laſt hope proves frequently vain:—By being long accuſtomed to artificial habits, we have loſt all taſte for ſimplicity, and what might eaſily have engaged our affections when young, we behold with averſion in the decline of life.

THEODOSIUS.

I UNDERSTAND you, my Lord.—You would adviſe me to cultivate the love of Nature, and to plan my life upon her ſimple model, while yet I am young.

Mr. De FENELON.

I WOULD—for the reaſons I have already mentioned;—becauſe in her walks you will find

find the only genuine, the only home-felt happineſs; which, however, you will be incapable of attaining, ſhould you defer the application, till the habits of artificial life have deprived you of all reliſh for natural enjoyments.

THEODOSIUS.

THE wiſdom and experience of my venerable inſtructor would be ſufficient to convince me of the truth of theſe obſervations; but I think I have, within the little limits of my own attention, ſeen the laſt confirmed in many inſtances.

Mr. DE FENELON.

IT muſt be obvious to every perſon who makes the leaſt remarks on life, that thoſe who have long lived in the circle of Vanity, can

can never quit it.—Not that they ſtill find their account of pleaſure in it; but that they are unfit for, and incapable of any other mode of enjoyment.—What veterans do we behold buſy in the purſuit of the moſt contemptible trifles! What a diſgrace to human reaſon, to behold a countenance, furrowed with age, diſtorted with chagrin over an unſucceſsful game! How diſguſtful to hear a matron weighed down with years, diſcourſing like a girl, on the frippery of modes!—Theſe are the unavoidable effects of purſuits habitually vain.—

But when I would adviſe you, Theodosius, to live agreeably to nature, it is not alone that I would ſave you from frivolous purſuits and fantaſtic follies.—Life is not to be left unactive; and by eſcaping ſeduction into the path of vanity, you will, of courſe, take that

that of wiſdom. To do this, indeed, and to live agreeably to nature, are terms of almoſt the ſame meaning.—For the end of wiſdom, is a rational and laſting happineſs, which is only to be found in acting conformably to the purpoſe of our exiſtence, and in treading in thoſe paths of truth and ſimplicity, which nature has pointed out.

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Here my ever revered inſtructor ended his welcome leſſons.—I could have ſpent a life in hearing him; and thereby ſhould have found that happineſs, which he taught me how to obtain.

Two ends are anſwered by thus committing his precepts to writing; which I have done

done without much difficulty, as they are yet freſh upon my memory.—The pen is an excellent memorialiſt; and, while I am writing them for you, I eſtabliſh them more ſecurely in my own mind.—

Let me now turn to your laſt dear letter, which is not yet three days old, though ſo much has been written ſince I received it.

Alas, my Constantia! (I addreſs you as my heart ſuggeſts) this delightful intercourſe may not be of any long continuance, notwithſtanding your kind and tender ſolicitude, that our friendſhip may not be interrupted.

The fathers of Conſtantia and of Theodoſius, though their ſituation in ſome meaſure draws them into a ſpecious interchange of civilities, are of tempers and ſentiments ſo totally different, that whenever they meet, methinks I can diſcover in each, a ſtifled contempt

tempt of the other. This gives me inexpreſſible mortification, as I am ſenſible that this contempt in both, ariſes from motives equally inſignificant; the one valuing himſelf on the ſuperiority of his fortune, the other on the advantages of his birth.

MISTAKEN men!—What are the diſtinctions that place one man above another?—Not wealth, or titles certainly.—Genius, wiſdom and virtue alone, have this diſtinguiſhing power; for theſe alone are capable of enlarging and ennobling the mind, and of exalting the human capacity as high as it will go.

How long this ſmothered contempt will be ſuppreſſed by politeneſs, I tremble to think.—Upon the leaſt failure of reſpect in either party, it will burſt into a ſtorm—and—ah!—then, my fair friend!—then, farewell this dear

dear and happy intercourſe of letters!—Farewell the delightful freedom of our morning converſations!—The ſweet *ſejour* at noon—

Sotto le freſche fronde
Del freſco faggio———

and the walk at evening through breathing beanfields.—Ah! enchanting walks, CONSTANTIA! when Fancy, heightened by the ſurrounding beauties of nature, gave to all our diſcourſe the happieſt enthuſiaſm!

SHOULD I not tremble, even at the poſſibility of loſing a happineſs like this?

—BUT let us not affict ourſelves with diſtant evils! (O that they were far diſtant!) I will think no longer of them, but quitting thoſe tenderly-anxious thoughts, which the beginning of your kind letter ſuggeſted, will

will proceed to that part of it, where you obligingly propoſe a queſtion, and call upon me for an anſwer.

I AM, indeed, of opinion, that the profeſſors of religion hurt it's intereſts by purſuing them too cloſely; particularly, when they make a merit of unnatural and unneceſſary ſeverities.—Yet this unfortunate doctrine has thrown it's galling weight on the eaſy yoke of Chriſtianity, almoſt ever ſince it's publication. —The fathers, thoſe fathers in whom the church has placed ſuch an implicit confidence, gave to that religion, which was meant to enlarge and humanize the mind, the meaneſt and moſt contracted ſpirit and principles.—Some diſgraced it by the vileſt quibbles † and miſquotations; others loaded it with the moſt ſuperfluous ſeverities, for-

† See Juſtin Martyr's ridiculous apologies for the croſs.

bidding

bidding the uſe of natural and lawful pleaſures *;—nay one † even goes ſo far, as to declare, that the Patriarch was deemed worthy of a heavenly viſion, only becauſe he lay his head upon the hard pillow of a ſtone, and what he did from neceſſity, adviſes us to do by choice.—One ‡ has fallen into the moſt idle and abſurd ſpirit of allegorizing the plaineſt literal narratives, facts, and precepts; another §, with equal abſurdity, adheres ſo cloſely to the letter, that he tells us the devil invented buſkins to give God the lie, becauſe it is ſaid, that a man cannot add one cubit to his ſtature.—In ſhort, my friend, theſe lights of the church were, in general, the moſt miſerable fanatics, ignorant, puerile, and

* Athenagoras, Jerom, Cyprian, &c.

† Clement of Alexandria.

‡ Origen.

§ Tertullian.

cruel.—No wonder, therefore, if thoſe who conſider them as guides, ſhould tread in their ſteps.—No wonder if they ſhould cheriſh ignorance, folly, fanaticiſm, and every ridiculous effect of blind and ſuperſtitious zeal.

UNDOUBTEDLY, my fair Reaſoner, theſe miſguided ſeverities are ruinous to the real intereſt of religion; and its profeſſors, as you obſerve, have certainly hurt thoſe intereſts by purſuing them too cloſely.

SLAVISH and broken ſpirits may thus, indeed, be impoſed upon;—but where is that *Free will-offering*, that rational and liberal worſhip, which founded in an intelligent faith and gratitude, does real honour to the deity?—Such a worſhip can never be paid, till the mind, reſcued from the tyranny of an impoſed

belief, acquires the privilege of thinking and concluding for itſelf.

It would, therefore, be for the real intereſt of religion (if that intereſt may be allowed to conſiſt in the promotion of a rational worſhip, and an intelligent faith) that the mind ſhould be ſet at large; and Father M—— would by no means loſe his account in it with regard to your piety, though he ſhould, as you ſay, give you a little reſpite, and ſuffer you to diverſify your reading and your ſtudies: For, what you obſerve is certainly juſt; and you would not only return to the attentions of religion with greater alacrity; but, by enlarging your moral and natural knowledge, you would acquire new and nobler principles of devotion, from beholding the wiſdom and benevolence of your Creator, diſplayed throughout the moral and the natural world.

BUT whether you can obtain this indulgence from your confeſſor or not, you will by all means ſecure this letter from his inquiſitorial eye; otherwiſe, the fate not only of the letter itſelf, but of the writer, may be ſomewhat dubious.

I SMILED at your wiſh, that I were appointed your confeſſor in the room of Father M——. If I thought you ſincere in that wiſh, I ſhould have very little inclination to be ſatisfied; for, believe me, I had rather ſtand in any other relation to you.—In one reſpect, however, I ſhould be gratified by this appointment.—I ſhould learn the ſtate of your heart; and be aſſured I would govern it with abſolute ſway,—that would be a circumſtance worthy my ambition.—Adieu! my amiable friend, and remember that if ever I am honoured with the abovementioned appoint-

appointment, I will make it my queſtion, whether you were ſincere when you expreſſed that wiſh.

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER IX.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

I HAVE a thouſand things to ſay; but where ſhall I begin, where end?—My heart dies within me, when I think of ſome paſſages in your laſt—what dreadful ſpirits of misfortune have you conjured up! lay them; for heaven's ſake lay them again, if you have any regard for my peace or happineſs.—Shall I tell you that the enjoyment of your friendſhip is very eſſential to both? Why ſhould I not tell you ſo? Surely ſilence on ſuch a ſubject would be a kind of diſingenuity!

THIS free and candid acknowledgment is the only return I am able to make, for all that induſtry of kindneſs I have experienced from

from THEODOSIUS.—Poor and inadequate is the reward, but what can I do more? Is it in my power to return thoſe leſſons in kind, by which I have been ſo much delighted,—I hope, profited?—Exalted Moraliſt! amiable and excellent Philoſopher! what a loſs would CONSTANTIA ſuffer, if deprived of your friendſhip! To you ſhe owes every valuable ſentiment, and almoſt all the little knowledge ſhe can boaſt;—whatever, in your kindneſs, you are pleaſed to diſtinguiſh with praiſe; all, all is yours:

——Onde ſ' alcun bel frutto
Naſce di me; da voi vien prima il ſeme.
Jo per me ſon quaſi un terreno aſciutto,
Colta da voi; e'l pregio è voſtro in tutto.

How infinitely am I obliged to you for communicating ſo minutely your converſation with the excellent Fenelon! every word of that

prelate deſerves to be written in letters of gold.—What ſublime philoſophy! What enlarged morality! What ſtriking lineaments of human nature, and human manners, appear in all his works!

But I am moſt charmed with the venerable man, when he explains and enforces his precept of *living agreeably to nature*.—I felt the truth of his obſervations without the aid of experience.—And ſhall I appear vain, when I tell you, that I have always retained certain ſentiments, that were of a colour with thoſe of your noble friend?—I have always thought that not only the moral, but the religious happineſs of human life, was beſt cultivated by that ſimplicity of manners and deſires, which would always attend the love and purſuit of nature. Admire with me the following paſſage, which deſcribes the happineſs of the man who leads ſuch a life:

E'l

E'l dubbio, e'l forſe, e'l come, e'l perché, rio
Nol poſſon far, che non iſtà fra loro;
E col vero e col ſemplice iddio lega,
E'l ciel propizio alle ſue voglie piega.

I think the ſentiment, in the third-quoted verſe, of uniting the idea of a GOD with *Truth* and *Simplicity*, remarkably beautiful.

YOU ſee I have already profited by the *Academician*'s letter, and have not neglected the amuſements of poetry and the *Belles Lettres*.—I am willing to aſcribe to this elegant courſe of reading, ſtill greater advantages than he has allowed it, and am of opinion, that the beſt philoſophy and morality, is to be found in the works of the poets; for with regard to philoſophy, I would gladly be of opinion with the Engliſh poet, where he ſays,

How

How charming is divine philoſophy!
Not harſh and crabbed as dull fools ſuppoſe,
But muſical as is Apollo's lute!

I would willingly perſuade myſelf, that the beſt poets are capable of inſtructing us in every part of uſeful knowledge; for I find a charm in their works, ſuperior to the pleaſure any other mode of writing affords me.

WHETHER it is the power of harmony, or imagination, that thus leads me captive, I am at a loſs to know; whether it is the elegance of thought, the tenderneſs, or the gentility peculiar to poetry, that delights me moſt, I am unable to determine; but all together give me the moſt exquiſite, the moſt refined entertainment.—I wonder not that honours, next to divine, have always been paid to poets; and that thoſe heaven-favoured geniuſes, have ever been eſteemed ſuperior to the

the reſt of mankind. For my own part; if I ſhould bring an offering to the ſhrine of any human Being, it ſhould be to that of a poet.

ADIEU!

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER X.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

THE approbation of CONSTANTIA is more than the reward of worlds, and her favour more valuable. The utmoſt of my ambition has ever been to ſerve and oblige her, but why will ſhe aſcribe to thoſe ſervices, to thoſe poor endeavours to pleaſe, more merit than they can poſſibly have a claim to? Yet it is no wonder if CONSTANTIA, who poſſeſſes every virtue in the higheſt degree, ſhould carry her gratitude to exceſs.

I WILL not anticipate thoſe evils which my fears, poſſibly too induſtrious, have ſo often brought before me; but, while this delightful correſpondence laſts, I will ſit down, with ſecurity, to enjoy the ſweets of it.

NOTHING

NOTHING could be more nobly conceived, than the ſentiment of uniting the idea of a GOD with *Truth* and *Simplicity*.—To deify and adore thoſe amiable virtues, is certainly a very pardonable ſpecies of idolatry—if, indeed, it can be called idolatry; for we, certainly, worſhip the SUPREME PERFECTION, while we worſhip his attributes, as it is only in thoſe we can form any idea of him.

AND yet it was from this ſource that idolatry, with all its troubleſome and pernicious conſequences, was derived of old. When the attributes of the univerſal Being were perſonified and exhibited by figures, the multitude, never capable of abſtracted thinking, numbered ſo many gods.

THE ſentiment of your poet has, nevertheleſs, great metaphorical propriety;—when divine

divine honours are paid to Truth and Simplicity, much, certainly, is done for the ſervice of virtue.

As you are profeſſedly an admirer of ſimple nature, I will venture to ſend you a poem, which, on that account, I hope will be recommended by the ſubject.—At leaſt, I am ſure, it has nothing elſe to recommend it; and let that declaration convince you, that I have not the ambition to aſpire to the name and dignity of a Poet, or to hope that you will bring an offering to my ſhrine.

Written

Written in a Cottage-garden, at a Village in *Lorrain*; and occaſioned by a Tradition, concerning a Tree of Roſemary.

Arbustum loquitur.

I.

O thou whom *Love* and *Fancy* lead
To wander near this woodland hill,
If ever muſic ſmooth'd thy quill,
Or pity wak'd thy gentle reed,
Repoſe beneath my humble tree,
If thou lov'ſt Simplicity.

II.

Stranger if thy lot has laid,
In toilſome ſcenes of buſy life;
Full ſorely may'ſt thou rue the ſtriſe,
Of weary paſſions ill-repaid.
In a garden live like me,
If thou lov'ſt Simplicity.

III.

Flowers have ſprung for many a year
O'er the village-maiden's grave,
That, one memorial-ſprig to ſave,
Bore it from a-ſiſter's bier;
And homeward-walking, wept o'er me
The true tears of Simplicity.

IV.

And ſoon, her cottage-window near
With care my ſlender ſtem ſhe plac'd;
And fondly thus her grief embrac'd,
And cheriſh'd ſad remembrance dear:
For love ſincere, and friendſhip free
Are children of Simplicity.

V.

When paſt was many a painful day,
Slow-pacing o'er the village-green,
In white were all its maidens ſeen,
And bore my guardian friend away.
And wet was ev'ry eye to ſee
The grave of ſweet Simplicity!

VI.

One generous ſwain her heart approv'd,
A youth, whoſe fond and faithful breaſt
With many an artleſs ſigh confeſs'd,
In nature's language, that he lov'd.
But, ſtranger, 'tis no tale for thee,
Unleſs thou lov'ſt Simplicity.

VII.

He died—and ſoon her lip was cold,
And ſoon her roſy cheek was pale;
The village wept to hear the tale,
When for both the ſlow bell toll'd——
Beneath yon flowery turf they lie,
The lovers of Simplicity.

VIII.

Yet one boon have I to crave;
Stranger, if thy pity bleed,
Wilt thou do one tender deed,
And ſtrew my pale flowers o'er their grave?
So lightly lie the turf on thee,
Becauſe thou lov'ſt Simplicity!

THERE is ſuch a pleaſure in the indulgence of tender melancholy and pity; that leſt I ſhould deprive you of it, I will add no more than

THEODOSIUS.

*** The flowery branch of Roſemary, that accompanies this was gathered from the tree, whoſe genius ſpoke the above verſes.

LETTER XI.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

YOU muſt be ſenſible that you could not oblige me more than by favouring me with any of your poetical productions.—Your Village-maid is a picture of rural Simplicity; as ſuch I ſhall preſerve it, together with the flowery branch of Roſemary, that accompanied it, for the ſake of the author.

YOUR laſt favour reminds me of another, which you ſome time ago promiſed, but have now, perhaps, forgot.—You praiſed the *Latin* verſes of the celebrated Engliſh poet we have ſo often admired, and called him the beſt writer in that language ſince the age of *Conſtantine*. When I complained that I was

unable to read him in that language, you kindly promiſed me a tranſlation of one of his fineſt *Latin* poems, which, I think, you called a Paſtoral Elegy on the death of one of his friends, whom he expected to have embraced on his return from abroad, but found that he had taken his journey to that diſtant country,

——from whoſe bourn
No traveller returns———

Such a ſubject is capable of great tenderneſs; and, at the hands of MILTON, it could not fail of finding it. Let me have one more inſtance of your kindneſs, in the execution of your promiſe.

ADIEU!

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER XII.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

I HAVE made haſte to oblige you; therefore, you muſt be as ready to forgive, as I have been to obey.

The paſtoral part of Milton's *Epitaphium Damonis*.

O FOR the muſic of HIMERIA's maids!
The ſtrains that died in *Arethuſa*'s ſhades;
Tun'd to wild ſorrow on her mournful ſhore,
When *Daphnis*, *Hylas*, *Bion* breath'd no more!
THAMES' vocal wave ſhould every note prolong,
And all his villas learn the *Doric* ſong.

How THYRSIS mourn'd his long-lov'd DAMON dead;
What ſighs he utter'd, and what tears he ſhed—

Ye dim retreats, ye wandering fountains know;
Ye desart-wilds bore witness to his woe:
Where oft in grief, he past the tedious day,
Or lonely languish'd the dull night away.

Twice had the fields their blooming honours bore;
And *Autumn* twice resign'd his golden store,
Unconscious of his loss, while Thyrsis staid
To woo sweet fancy in the *Tuscan* shade.
Crown'd with her favour, when he sought again
His flock forsaken, and his native plain;
When to his *old* Elm's wonted shade return'd—
Then—then he miss'd his parted friend—and mourn'd.
And go, he cry'd, my tender lambs adieu!
Your wretched master has no time for you.

Yet are there powers divine in earth or sky?
Gods can they be who destin'd thee to die?
And shalt thou mix with shades of vulgar name?
Lost thy fair honours, and forgot thy fame?
Not he, the God whose golden wand restrains
The pale-ey'd people of the gloomy plains,
Of Damon's fate shall thus regardless be,
Or suffer vulgar shades to herd with thee.
Then go, he cry'd, &c.

YET while one ſtrain my trembling tongue may try,
Not unlamented, Shepherd, ſhalt thou die.
Long in theſe fields thy fame ſhall flouriſh fair,
And DAPHNIS only greater honours ſhare;
To DAPHNIS only purer vows be paid,
While PAN, or PALES loves the village-ſhade.
If Truth or Science may ſurvive the grave,
Or, what is more, a poet's friendſhip ſave,
Then go, &c.

THESE, theſe are thine: For me what hopes remain!
Save of long ſorrow, and of anguiſh vain.
For who, ſtill faithful to my ſide, ſhall go,
Like thee, thro' regions clad with chilling ſnow?
Like thee, the rage of fiery ſummers bear,
When nature ſhrinks beneath the burning air?
The lurking dangers of the chace eſſay,
Or ſooth with ſong, and various tale the day?
Then go, &c.

To whom ſhall I my hopes and fears impart?
Or truſt the *cares* and *follies* of my heart?
Whoſe gentle counſels put thoſe cares to flight?
Whoſe chearful converſe cheat the tedious night?

The ſocial hearth when *Autumn*'s treaſures ſtore,
Chill blow the winds without, and thro' the bleak elm roar.
Then go, &c.

When the fierce ſuns of ſummer noons invade,
And Pan repoſes in the green-wood-ſhade,
The ſhepherds hide, the nymphs plunge down the deep,
And waves the hedge-row o'er the plowman's ſleep.
Ah! who ſhall charm with ſuch addreſs refin'd,
Such *Attic* wit, and elegance of mind?
Then go, &c.

Alas! now lonely round my fields I ſtray;
And lonely ſeek the paſture's wonted way.
Or in ſome dim vale's mournful ſhade repoſe—
There penſive wait the weary day's ſlow cloſe,
While ſhowers deſcend, the gloomy tempeſt raves,
And o'er my head the ſtraggling twilight waves.
Then go, &c.

Where once fair harveſt cloath'd my cultur'd plain,
Now weeds obſcene and vexing brambles reign;

The

The groves of myrtle, and the cluſtering vine
Delight no more; for joy no more is mine.
My flocks no longer find a maſter's care;
E'en piteous as they gaze with looks of dumb
deſpair.
Then go, &c.

Thy hazel, Tyt'rus, has no charms for me;
Nor yet thy wild aſh, lov'd Alphesiben.
No more ſhall Fancy weave her rural dream,
By Ægon's willow, or Amynta's ſtream,
The trembling leaves, the fountain's cool ſerene,
The murmuring zephyr, and the moſſy green—
Theſe ſmile unſeen, and thoſe unheeded play,
I cut my ſhrubs, and careleſs walk'd away.
Then go, &c.

Morus, who knows what fates the ſtars
diſpenſe,
And ſolves the grove's wild warblings into ſenſe.
This Morus mark'd—what thus thy ſpleen can
move?
Some baleful planet, or ſome hopeleſs love?

The

The ſtar of SATURN oft annoys the ſwain,
And in the dull, cold breaſt, long holds his leaden reign.
Then go, &c.

THE Nymphs too, piteous of their Shepherd's woe,
Came, the ſad cauſe ſolicitous to know.
Is this the part of jocund youth they cry,
That look diſguſted, and that down-caſt eye?
Gay ſmiles and love on that ſoft ſeaſon wait;
*He's twice a wretch whom beauty wounds too late.
Then go, &c.

ONE gentle tear the *Britiſh* CHLORIS gave,
CHLORIS the grace of MALDON's purple wave—
In vain—my grief no ſoothing words diſarm,
Nor future hopes, nor preſent good can charm.
Then go, &c.

* Milton ſeems to have borrowed this ſentiment from Guarini:

Che ſe t'aſſale a la canuta etate
Amoroſo talento,
Havrai doppio tormento,
E di quel, che potendo non voleſti,
E di quel, che volendo no potrai.

THE

The happier flocks one ſocial ſpirit moves,
The ſame their ſports, their paſtures and their loves;
Their hearts to no peculiar object tend,
None knows a favourite, or ſelects a friend.
So herd the various natives of the main,
And PROTEUS drives in crowds his ſcaly train.
The feather'd tribes too find an eaſier fate;
The meaneſt ſparrow ſtill enjoys his mate:
And when by chance, or wearing age ſhe dies,
The tranſient loſs a ſecond choice ſupplies.

MAN, hapleſs man, for ever doom'd to know
The dire vexations that from diſcord flow,
In all the countleſs numbers of his kind,
Can ſcarcely meet with one congenial mind.
If haply found, Death wings the fatal dart,
The tender union breaks, and breaks his heart.
Then go, &c.

AH me! what error tempted me to go
O'er foreign mountains and thro' *Alpine* ſnow?
Too great the price to mark in TIBER's gloom
The mournful image of departed ROME!
Nay, yet immortal, could ſhe boaſt again
The glories of her univerſal reign.

And all that MARO left his fields to ſee,
Too great the purchaſe to abandon thee!
To leave thee in a land no longer ſeen!—
Bid mountains riſe, and oceans roll between!—
Ah! not embrace thee!—not to ſee thee die!
Meet thy laſt looks, or cloſe thy languid eye!
Not one fond farewell with thy ſhade to ſend,
Nor bid thee think of thy ſurviving friend!
Then go, &c.

YE *Tuſcan* Shepherds, pardon me this tear!
Dear to the Muſe, to me for ever dear!
The youth I mourn a *Tuſcan* title bore.—
See * *Lydian* LUCCA for her ſon deplore!

O DAYS of extaſy! when wrapt I lay
Where ARNO wanders down his flowery way,—
Pluck'd the pale violet, preſs'd the velvet mead,
Or bade the myrtle's balmy fragrance bleed!—
Delighted, heard amid the rural throng
MENALCAS ſtrive with LYCIDAS in ſong.

* The Thuſcans were a branch of the Pelaſgi that migrated into Europe not many ages after the diſperſion. Some of them marched by land as far as *Lydia*, and from thence detached a colony under the conduct of *Tyrſenus* to Italy.

OFT

Oft would my voice the mimic ſtrain eſſay,
Nor haply all unheeded was my lay:
For, Shepherds, yet I boaſt your generous meed,
The oſier baſket, and compacted reed.
Francino crown'd me with a poet's fame,
And Dati* taught his beechen groves my name.

Milton, when he was in *Italy*, had the peculiar good fortune, to find an age of geniuſes, and to be diſtinguiſhed by their favour in a very extraordinary manner. That poliſh which the young mind receives from the elegant ſimplicity of the claſſics, he enjoyed in the greateſt perfection. The conſiderable fund of that kind of knowledge, which he took with him into Italy, he had the happieſt means of improving and perfecting, in thoſe inſpiring ſcenes, where the fineſt

* When Milton was in Italy, Carlo Dati was profeſſor of Philoſophy at Florence.—A liberal friend to men of genius and learning, as well foreigners as his own countrymen.—He wrote a panegyric and ſome poems on Lewis XIV. beſide other tracts.

writers of *Latium* firſt drew their breath — Thoſe ſcenes afforded the beſt comment on the works of the *Roman* claſſics, and *Milton* ſhewed in all his *Latin* poems, that he taſted their beauties in the moſt refined degree.

THE friend he bewails in the charming poem, of which I have made theſe humble efforts to ſhew you the beauties, was the companion of his early years; and it is no wonder that he laments him with ſuch pathetic tenderneſs: For friendſhips of that kind, which are nurſed under the ſunſhine of young enthuſiaſm, are always the moſt vigorous.—Are they not, my CONSTANTIA?—I feel they are; for I am, &c.

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER XIII.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

I FLEW with your letter to our favourite alcove; and there with what pleaſure, with what avidity I peruſed it, THEODOSIUS need not be told.

I VERILY believe, that I am better pleaſed to be entertained than to be inſtructed; for I ſcarce ever received ſo much pleaſure from a letter of yours, as your laſt afforded me—yet what can be the reaſon? It is not, certainly, that I am jealous of your inſtructive letters as giving you a ſuperiority—I cannot charge myſelf with ſo much pride.—Nay, were I not ſenſible of that ſuperiority, I muſt be ſtupid indeed;—thus, however, I flatter myſelf on my penetration in being able to diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh it, and on my modeſty in being ſatisfied with it; and thus, like many other good people, I am vain of being free from vanity.

But all the inſtructions of my amiable Philoſopher have been ſeaſoned with ſo much politeneſs, or conveyed in ſuch an indirect manner, that while I had all the opportunity of profiting by them, I could hardly ever diſcern that they were intended for my uſe.—If then your laſt letter pleaſed me more than any other, it is becauſe I am idle, and voluptuous, and take more pleaſure in poetry than in philoſophy.

Yet the genius of Milton had ſuch a moral turn, that he ſeldom wrote poetry without writing philoſophy; and even the paſtoral you have ſo obligingly tranſlated, is not, I find, without ſomething of it. How beautifully does he bewail the loſt advantages of friendſhip!

To

To whom ſhall I my hopes and fears impart,
Or truſt the cares and follies of my heart?

And alas! how truly does he lament that man

In all the countleſs numbers of his kind,
Can ſcarcely meet with one congenial mind!

Young as I am, I have felt the force of this truth, and have made many melancholy reflections upon it, after the painful, ridiculous, trifling, and impertinent viſits I have been obliged to pay and receive, from the fillier part of my ſex. Horrid tyranny of faſhion that impoſes this upon us! What right can an equality, or a ſuperiority of fortune give one lady to rob another of her time, ſenſe, and patience? I ſay her *Senſe*; for the converſation of fools leaves a tincture of folly upon us.—What title has dreſs or figure to lay a tax

upon us for admiration? Do not they who expect this, inſult our underſtanding? And are not thoſe who pay it, the ſlaves of folly? O that the ſhackles of cuſtom were once broken, and that we might chuſe our ſociety out of either ſex without cenſure, or inconvenience!

Just before I received your letter, I was delivered from the moſt deſpicable and impertinent ſet of viſitors, that ever diſgraced the name of good company.—To me ſuch viſits are always viſitations.—To the above-mentioned deliverance, you may, if you pleaſe, impute ſome degree of that extraordinary pleaſure I aſcribed to the peruſal of your letter.—This I ſay, leſt I ſhould contribute to make you, what you have ſo often made me, vain; and thus, at leaſt, you muſt acknowledge, that I outdo you in generoſity.

I am

I AM not diſpleaſed with your obſervation, that young friendſhips are the moſt tender—no doubt they are—for the friendſhips, like all other purſuits and attachments of youth, have novelty to recommend them, paſſions to enliven, and enthuſiaſm to cheriſh them.—But ah! my friend! (for once I will ſay, my THEODOSIUS!) when novelty is no more; when the paſſions ſubſide, and enthuſiaſm vaniſhes like a dream; will not the friendſhips, will not the attachments, that theſe principles produced, vaniſh with them?—I will not fear it, though it ſhould be true

——non é prudenza
Ma follia de mortali
L' arte crudel di preſagirſi i mali.

One thing, however, I will freely acknowledge, or rather boaſt of, that my friendſhip for THEODOSIUS is, excluſively, founded

on eſteem. For this reaſon, I flatter myſelf, that it will laſt in all its preſent cordiality—why ſhould it not? It has nothing to loſe, when the charm of novelty is loſt.—Its exiſtence, by no means, depends upon the paſſions; it has, therefore, nothing to apprehend when they languiſh, or decline.—It derives not its ſupport from enthuſiaſm, and, conſequently, cannot ſuffer, when enthuſiaſm dies away.

While thus I comfort, I hope I do not deceive myſelf.—But, ſhould even that be the caſe, let your ſagacity for once give way to your compaſſion, and do not undeceive me.—This is, perhaps, the only inſtance in which I could be ſatisfied with myſelf, for declining the report of truth.

Observe, however, that I expect you will, with the utmoſt candour and ingenuity, reſolve

reſolve ſome parts of my doubts, and tell me freely, whether thoſe young friendſhips which are heightened by novelty, by the paſſions and enthuſiaſm, will not inevitably periſh with thoſe ſources that ſupport them.

You ſee I have been at pains to induce you to declare your ſentiments, on this ſubject; ſince I have removed the principal objection, that might have occurred to you, by declaring, that my friendſhip for you cannot be affected by the argument.

ADIEU!

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER XIV.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

THOUGH there is nothing in which CONSTANTIA has not a right to command her friend, and though, in every thing, it is his pride and pleaſure to obey her; yet he will own, that he goes unwillingly about the taſk ſhe has appointed him.—

AH! my dear, my amiable moraliſt! It is frequently the happineſs of man to ſhut his eyes againſt the infirmities of his nature!— In thoſe circumſtances, where the knowledge of his weakneſs cannot ſave him from ſome real evil, that knowledge is of leſs value than ignorance.

THE

THE benevolent purpoſes of Providence, have concealed the future from us, that we may not be interrupted in the enjoyment of the preſent; and it is, in many caſes, neceſſary to our happineſs, that we ſhould imitate this œconomy of the Supreme Wiſdom, and embrace thoſe innocent pleaſures, which the ſeveral periods of life may afford us, without enquiring too officiouſly into their cauſes or events, and without being too ſolicitous about their duration.

MANY, poſſibly, of our pleaſures, many, I am ſure, of our amuſements, ſpring from ſuch ſources, as, upon enquiry, would be found to do little honour to a creature diſtinguiſhed by reaſon. Their tendency, at the ſame time, is frequently as inſignificant as their cauſe, and both are unworthy of a ſerious enquiry.

THERE are, indeed, enjoyments of a higher nature that may better deſerve our attention; and yet, to enquire into the probability of their duration, might contribute very little to our happineſs.—

SUCH, in particular, are the connections of friendſhip.—Theſe are the property of man, and muſt, therefore, be frail, changeable and uncertain like himſelf. It muſt, conſequently, be for his eaſe to ſit down unapprehenſive to enjoy them, without meditating on all the poſſible variety of evils, to which they muſt be expoſed, from a change of ſentiments and inclinations, and from the ſeveral contingencies of chance and time.

IT is into the fate of young friendſhips, my CONSTANTIA, that you would lead my enquiries. Theſe, indeed, are not the leaſt unworthy of our attention; for youth is the

ſeaſon

ſeaſon both of friendſhip and of virtue.—If to a diſpoſition naturally not unſociable, we have added the advantages of a liberal education, we come into the buſineſs and ſociety of life, in general, better and happier creatures than we are when we leave it.

We ſtep into the world with liberal ſentiments and benevolent affections, but the experimental knowledge of men contracts the former and ſtarves the latter.—Inſomuch that he muſt be poſſeſſed of a diſpoſition more than ordinarily humane, who does not in ſome degree become a miſanthropiſt before he dies.—I may go further, and add, that he muſt have uncommon virtue and greatneſs of mind, who, with unblemiſhed manners, and uncontracted ſentiments, can ſail with ſuch a corrupted crew down the current of life.

MAN is, in ſpite of all his reaſon, an imitative creature, and what he has been long accuſtomed to obſerve in others, he will, with difficulty, forbear to admit in himſelf. By habit we may bring ourſelves to behold deformity without diſguſt, and by being long converſant in ſcenes of enmity and inſincerity, the love of truth and humankind will inſenſibly decay.

As youth, therefore, is the ſeaſon of ſincerity and benevolence, it muſt, of conſequence, be the moſt promiſing ſeaſon of friendſhip; for thoſe virtues are its beſt and ſureſt foundation.

WE love a benevolent man for our own ſakes, and a ſincere man for the ſake of his ſincerity.—Eſteem for ever attends the union of theſe;—that eſteem which my CONSTAN-

TIA has done me the honour to acknowledge as the ſource of her friendſhip!

THUS, my fair Caſuiſt, you ſee we have a ſufficient foundation where to erect an early friendſhip, excluſive of *Novelty*, the *Paſſions*, and *Enthuſiaſm*; and we may juſtly conclude, therefore, that ſuch a friendſhip may exiſt, though all ſuch auxiliaries ſhould vaniſh or decay.

YET while theſe laſt, they undoubtedly yield us a more high-ſet pleaſure, as well in friendſhip, as in every other enjoyment.

NEVERTHELESS I know not whether much ought to be aſcribed to Novelty, which, in the cup of friendſhip, is, certainly, the very worſt ingredient.—Poſſibly it may, for a while, give a poignancy to the taſte, but the

mellowing

mellowing power of Time produces a much better and more agreeable flavour.

The prevalence and activity of the paſſions, keep up that lively zeſt, and ardour of affection, which add to the readineſs of confidence, and are productive of a thouſand agreeable ſenſations.

Enthusiasm has an effect on friendſhip proportionable to its influence on Love.—It heightens it with the glowing ſentiments of imagination, and embelliſhes its real advantages with the viſionary charms of Fancy, and intellectual Refinement!

Yet when theſe ſhall depart with departing youth; while *Sincerity* and *Benevolence* remain, Friendſhip ſhall remain with them. —A reflection, which affords me the higheſt con-

conſolation! as I am convinced that, in conſequence of thoſe principles, CONSTANTIA cannot ceaſe to be the friend of

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER XV.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

WHAT a letter! my friend.—If you have drawn a true picture of human nature, and if the knowledge of the world be really attended with the conſequences you mention, who would not live in ignorance? —Ah! THEODOSIUS! what fears! what uneaſineſs has your letter awakened!—Better, indeed, my Philoſopher, had you ſuffered me to continue in ignorance!—Better, and kinder, had you permitted me to enjoy my viſionary dream of the duration and improvement of human virtue!—Ah! too penetrating friend!—Too ingenious in the diſcovery of that weakneſs, it would have been happier to hide!—You were ſenſible of this truth,

truth, and why would you gratify my impertinent curioſity, only to make me miſerable?—To give me melancholy and mortifying ideas of that life in which my lot has fallen!

YET, ſurely, THEODOSIUS, the ſweet affections of BENEVOLENCE will not wear away with youth.—If the commerce of the world doth not corrupt the heart, ſurely, it will ſtill have room for ſo delightful a gueſt.—I declare, that without one womaniſh fear, I would part with my being, rather than hold it on any other terms.

BUT what ſuperfluous apprehenſions do I entertain? This dreadful ſhipwreck can only happen on the tempeſtuous ocean of the world—my bark, I am determined, ſhall not be expoſed to ſuch ruin.—Safely ſhall it ſteer

into ſome quiet harbour, and reſt ſecure from ſtorms and tempeſts.

SERIOUSLY and plainly, my friend, you have given me ſuch ideas of mixing with the world, and of the inconveniences which attend it, that I, who can boaſt no ſuperior fortitude, conclude, it muſt be my happineſs to live in ſolitary obſcurity.—There I can embrace your good prelate's precept, and *live agreeably to nature.*—There I ſhall be free from the impertinence of Folly, and the cenſoriouſneſs of Envy.—My precious hours will not be ſacrificed to trifiers; I ſhall employ them in ſtudies worthy of a rational creature.

O THEODOSIUS! for thoſe delightful moments that ſhall glide away on the halcyon-wings of Peace and Tranquillity:—for thoſe dear uninterrupted days of letters and leiſure, when the mind may riot in intellectual feſtivity;

vity; and free from every low, every vulgar and debaſing care, may acquire that dignity and knowledge, which ſhall properly recommend it to ſome higher ſtate of exiſtence!

WHAT luxury is in the thought! even now I anticipate the happineſs I deſcribe.—Even now, in imagination, I enjoy thoſe eaſy pleaſures, that independence of mind and body, which ſolitude and liberty muſt afford.—I look back on THEODOSIUS buſtling in the world, pity him, pray for him, and tremble for his virtue.

ADIEU! ADIEU!

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER XVI.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

"ENJOY thy dream, dear and amiable Enthuſiaſt! Enjoy thy viſionary ſcene! To rouze thee from thoſe delightful reveries, to break thoſe fancy-favoured ſlumbers, would be cruel, if not impious."—Such, and ſo expreſſed were my ſentiments, on peruſing your laſt dear letter.—But Tenderneſs muſt give place to Truth;—at leaſt in a circumſtance ſo important, as that of laying down a plan of life.

THERE is ſcarce any thing in which the mind is ſo apt to miſtake its true intereſt, as in projects of future happineſs.—It is impoſſible to know how we ſhall bear thoſe ſtations, or circumſtances, which we have only con-

contemplated at an unaffecting diſtance; and yet, with an aſſurance that does more honour to our courage, than our diſcretion, we venture to conclude, that thoſe appointments, or ſchemes of life to which we are perfectly ſtrangers, would infallibly complete our felicity.

In the mean time, we never conſider, that new ſtations, and appointments to which we have not been accuſtomed, muſt neceſſarily take us out of our uſual train of ſentiments, actions, and attentions. This, however, will make us uneaſy; for change, as Numa obſerved, when he was invited to the kingdom of Rome, is always an evil, and we never feel it more ſenſibly, than in the manner and œconomy of life.

With reſpect to your ſcheme of living ſecluded from the world, I ſhould have con-

demned it with the ſhort cenſure of a ſmile, had I not paid ſo much deference to your Reaſon and *Judgment*, as to conclude, that thoſe ought to be appealed to on every argument that might relate to your ſentiments and reſolutions.

WILL my beautiful friend forgive me, then, if I ſuppoſe *that Judgment* to have been *bribed* by enthuſiaſm, when ſhe concluded that, by living alone, ſhe ſhould *live agreeably to nature?*

I AM ſenſible, Madam, that by this you meant no more than, that ſuch a mode of life would exempt you from thoſe external temptations, thoſe idle luxuries and follies, which are apt to make us deviate from the paths of Truth and Simplicity.—But did you conſider, that to live *alone*, is to live *contrary* to nature?—A ſtate of ſolitude, is not the

natural

natural ſtate of man.—The arguments I ſhould make uſe of to prove this are old and obvious.—That I may be leſs unentertaining, therefore, while I mean to ſet before you the inconveniencies attending your ſcheme of life, I will give you a ſhort account of a lady of my own family, who formed the ſame reſolutions, and put them in practice.

THUS her ſtory is related in a manuſcript, ſtill preſerved among the family-papers.

" EUDOCIA, an only daughter, was bred up under the auſpices of ALTHERIA, a lady equally diſtinguiſhed by her piety as a chriſtian, and her affection as a parent. The temper and genius of the daughter were naturally warm and ſuſceptible: The offices and duties of religion had habitually inſpired her with ſuch a zealous and fervent devotion, that ſhe ſeemed to have no happineſs, that

did not flow from thoſe exerciſes and attentions which religion required.

Her knowledge of books was little, of human nature leſs. She had, notwithſtanding, conceived an infinite contempt for that world, to which ſhe was utterly a ſtranger, and concluded, that to enter into the intereſts and engagements of ſociety, would be a voluntary ſacrifice to Vice and Folly.

Eudocia was, in natural good ſenſe, beauty, and a ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, equalled by few women of her time.—Theſe qualities engaged the affections of Alphenor, a gentleman whoſe genius and penetration gave him a kind of intuitive knowledge of the human heart.

He concluded, that every attempt to introduce Eudocia to the world, or to eſtabliſh

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the ſocial life in her good opinion would be vain. He knew that it would be fruitleſs to argue with her on the pleaſures ſhe had never known, and the miſeries ſhe had never experienced.—He, therefore, did not expatiate, either on the advantages of ſociety, or the inconveniences of ſolitude; for ſuch had been the condition of EUDOCIA's life, that, as yet, ſhe was, in a great meaſure, a ſtranger to both.

UPON the death of her parents, which happened before ſhe had attained her twenty-fifth year, her fortune and manner of life were at her own diſpoſal.—She now determined to put in execution a ſcheme which ſhe had long meditated.—It was to retire, but not into a convent. A ſpirit of liberty had always ſaved her from that ſacrifice, however induſtriouſly ſolicited by the emiſſaries of

the church, or encouraged by ſelfiſh relations.

She was poſſeſſed of an eſtate, ſituated in a very retired part of the province of *Compeigne*; and there it was that ſhe had determined to live ſequeſtered from the world, with no other ſociety than an aged confeſſor, and neceſſary domeſtics—Of the laſt ſhe made a very few, and thoſe females, ſufficient.

At this criſis it might have been expected, that Alphenor would have uſed his utmoſt addreſs to diſſuade her from her purpoſe.—By no means.—On the contrary, he encouraged her in her reſolution, applauded the piety of her purpoſe, and expatiated on the happineſs of ſolitary ſanctity. He aſſumed not the leaſt of the lover's character, but that of the religious friend.

By

By this means he gained one point, which he had uſed all his induſtry, all his art to obtain.—He had EUDOCIA's permiſſion to pay her one viſit at the end of three months after her retirement; a favour which was allowed to none beſide, either of her friends, or acquaintance, and which ALPHENOR himſelf, though through the mediation of religion, had ſcarce addreſs ſufficient to obtain.

EUDOCIA retired.—She approached the confines of her eſtate with raptures, and paid a kind of idolatrous worſhip to the venerable groves that ſurrounded her habitation,

"HAIL, ſhe cried, ye innocent and happy "foreſters! ye ſhall at once be the witneſſes "and the guardians of my repoſe.—Enjoy "your vegetable exiſtence, ſecure from the "cruelties

" cruelties and the ravages of man;—I have
" fled from the evils of ſociety, to enjoy
" peace and innocence with you—my unde-
" ſigning friends! my blameleſs companions!
" often ſhall I aſſociate with you, and re-
" poſe under the kind protection of your
" ſhade."

WITH the ſame kind of enthuſiaſtic plea-ſure ſhe walked through the ſeveral apart-ments of her houſe, conſecrating each with a kind of petitionary ejaculation.

FOR the firſt week of her retirement, ſhe found ſufficient employment in the œco-nomy of her family, and the diſtribution of their ſeveral offices to her domeſtics.—The ſecond ſhe devoted wholly to reli-gious exerciſes and the raptures of devo-tion.

I HAVE

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I HAVE been interrupted, and you will not at preſent be troubled with any further account of my pious anceſtor.

ADIEU!

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER XVII.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

* * * *BUT* whatever is rapturous cannot laſt long: Thoſe exerciſes that lift the mind above its uſual pitch, if too frequently, or too long indulged, will, at length, either totally deſtroy it, or deprive it of that ſobriety, which is neceſſary for the preſervation of its due poiſe.

NATURE ſeems, in kindneſs, to have guarded us againſt the inconveniences that might ariſe from hence, by ſhortening the influence of joy, by inclining us to variety, and by giving the property, either of indifference, or diſguſt to every object, that has been too long, or too aſſiduouſly purſued, with whatever

ever avidity it might have been embraced at firſt.

THAT little ſociety to which EUDOCIA had hitherto been accuſtomed, was a neceſſary relief from the aſſiduities of religious ſtudies and exerciſes; and, far from being any prejudice, was, in reality, favourable to the intereſts of religion.—It is certain, however, that ſhe was of a different opinion, upon her firſt ſecluſion from the world; but many weeks had not paſſed, before ſhe felt the inconveniences of her miſtake, if ſhe was unwilling to perceive the miſtake itſelf.

THE exerciſes of devotion, by being too frequently repeated, became languid and unaffecting: Her mind, having been accuſtomed to communication, ſhrunk under the weight of its own ſentiments; and every ſucceeding

day

day approached leſs welcome, and more feared than the former.

WHAT ſhould ſhe do? Should ſhe return to that world ſhe had forſaken and deſpiſed? But a ſenſe of ſhame and pride roſe in oppoſition to that thought, and ſtrangled it in its birth.

IN this diſſatisfied and dejected ſtate, ſhe recollected the appointment of ALPHENOR's viſit—with joy ſhe recollected it, and remembered, with a bluſh, the difficulties ſhe had ſtarted againſt it.

"How, ſaid ſhe, ſhall I conceal that plea-
"ſure, which I cannot but feel at the ſight
"of ALPHENOR? If I expreſs my real ſenti-
"ments, he will have reaſon to think his pre-
"ſence of ſome conſequence to my happi-
"neſs; and if I receive his viſit with an in-
"difference

"difference equal to that with which I re-
"ceived the propoſal of it, I ſhall do vio-
"lence to that candour and ſincerity of heart,
"which cannot bear even the ſhadow of diſ-
"ſimulation.—In the former caſe, I ſhould
"appear a weak and unſteady creature to
"ALPHENOR.—In the latter, I ſhould be-
"come inſupportable to myſelf."

WHILE ſhe was thus meditating, in what manner ſhe ſhould receive her friend, the time appointed for his viſit was at hand.—But ALPHENOR did not appear—Maſter of every key to the human heart, he knew that if, by delaying his viſit to EUDOCIA, he gave it the appearance of uncertainty, that uncertainty would probably create an anxiety on her part, which might not be unfavourable to his deſign.

THIS had the desired effect: Day after day passed away in the same solitary languor, and EUDOCIA concluded, that the many objections she had made to ALPHENOR's visit had determined him at last, to think of it no more.—This reflection made her miserable, and she now wished for nothing so ardently, as that the presence of her friend would prove those apprehensions vain.

AT length he came.—A tear fell from the eye of EUDOCIA, when she received him; he observed it, and knew that he had now nothing more to do, than to reconcile her to herself, and to enable her to acknowledge her mistake without shame, or confusion.

THOSE wants that invention or eloquence could supply never distressed him long.

"I HOPE,

"I HOPE, Madam," ſaid he, "that a life "of ſolitude has been more comfortable to "you than it has been to me."—"How," cried EUDOCIA, "has ALPHENOR been a "Solitaire?"

"SUCH, Madam, I have been ever ſince I "loſt the happineſs of EUDOCIA's converſa- "tion.—It was always my ambition to imi- "tate her.—Shall ſhe, ſaid I, ſhall a woman "have fortitude to forſake the world, and re- "tire to ſolitude, to practiſe the ſublime duties "of religion; and ſhall I not profit by the ex- "ample of that virtue I cannot but praiſe?— "But alas! Madam! alas! EUDOCIA! ſhall "I confeſs to you——"

"WHAT would ALPHENOR confeſs?" "That either the miſeries and the incon- "veniences of abſolute ſolitude muſt be very "great, or that I muſt have an uncommon

" and disgraceful weakness of mind; for the " time I have thus devoted, I have not spent " in happiness, but in languor and discon- " tent."

EUDOCIA shed another tear.

" How kind, said ALPHENOR, thus to pity " the unhappiness of your friend!"

" I CANNOT, replied EUDOCIA, accept of " a compliment I do not deserve. The tear " you observed had something selfish in it.— " ALPHENOR can have no weakness, that is " not the weakness of human nature; and, " could it be any satisfaction to him to know, " that his friend has been as miserable in a " state of solitude as himself, his own inge- " nuous confession might countenance her " in acknowledging it."

FOR

FOR a woman of my CONSTANTIA's penetration, it would be needleſs to tranſcribe any more of the above narrative; and it will be ſufficient to inform her, that from the union of ALPHENOR and EUDOCIA, in a diſtant deſcent, came

THEODOSIUS.

LETTER XVIII.

CONSTANTIA to THEODOSIUS.

OH! Theodoſius!—my guide!—my friend!—my inſtructor! alas!—no more!——

THE tear ſwims in my eye—my heart ſwells; and my hand trembles while I tell you, that you are—baniſhed for ever from this place, and that I am forbidden to ſee you, or hear from you more.

WHAT, what ſhall I do? nothing ever can repair this cruel loſs—the loſs of a wife, a learned, and a virtuous friend! What has the world of equal worth!—Deprived, for ever deprived of that preſence, which enliven-

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ed with invariable cheerfulneſs and ſenſibility!—of that converſation which never failed to make the mind richer, the heart happier—and (O cruel extenſion of reſentment!) of that precious, that inſtructive correſpondence, which, as it afforded me the beſt means of cultivating and improving my mind, ought to have been conſidered with gratitude by the very perſon who has forbidden it.

But of whom, or of what do I preſume to complain? Duty reſtrains the remonſtrances of grief and the expoſtulations of ſorrow.—You are not now ignorant, that the quarrel you dreaded, has actually happened, with the bittereſt recriminations.

Then, farewell, my beſt, and moſt valuable friend!—for ever to be remembered!—for ever to be regretted!—Accept of all I

can

can return for your invariable, your industrious kindness!—Most respected of men!—most esteemed of friends!—Accept the gratitude of a tear, and think of

CONSTANTIA.

LETTER XIX.

To THEODOSIUS.

From an unknown hand.

THE writer of this letter is not a ſtranger to the mutual regard of THEODOSIUS and CONSTANTIA.—From ſure authority he knows, that the hand of that lady is, by the appointment of her father, in which, it ſeems, ſhe has acquieſced, within two days to be given to another. THEODOSIUS will make what uſe he thinks proper of this information, and conclude that he receives it from

A FRIEND.

LETTER XX*.

THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA.

THE thought of my CONSTANTIA, which has for ſome time been my only happineſs, is now become a greater torment to me than I am able to bear.—Muſt I then live to ſee you another's?—Death is in the thought; and, indeed, life itſelf is now become a burthen to me.—May you long be happy in the world, but forget that there was ever ſuch a man in it as

THEODOSIUS.

* This letter, which, with ſome little variations, is recorded by the Spectator, N°. 164, concludes the Correſpondence of THEODOSIUS and CONSTANTIA, from their firſt acquaintance to the departure of THEODOSIUS.

END OF VOLUME I.